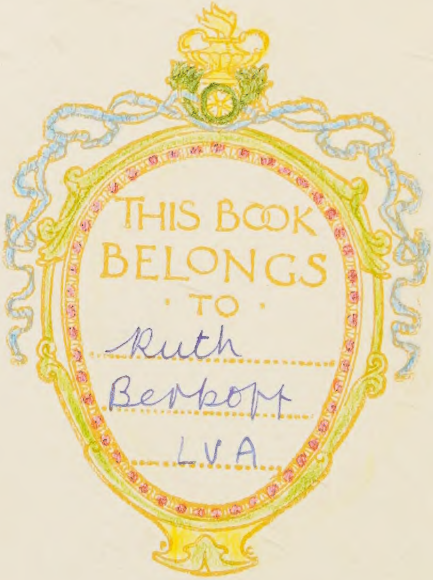
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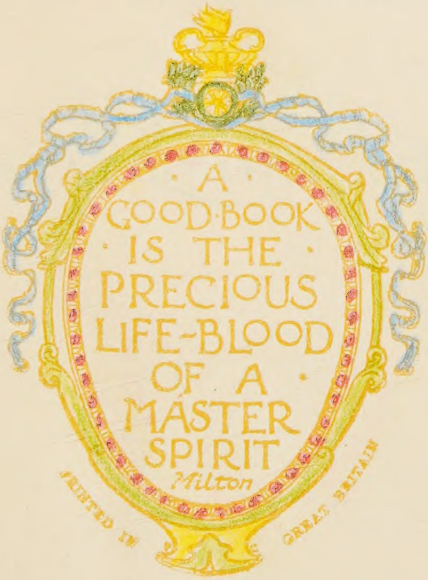
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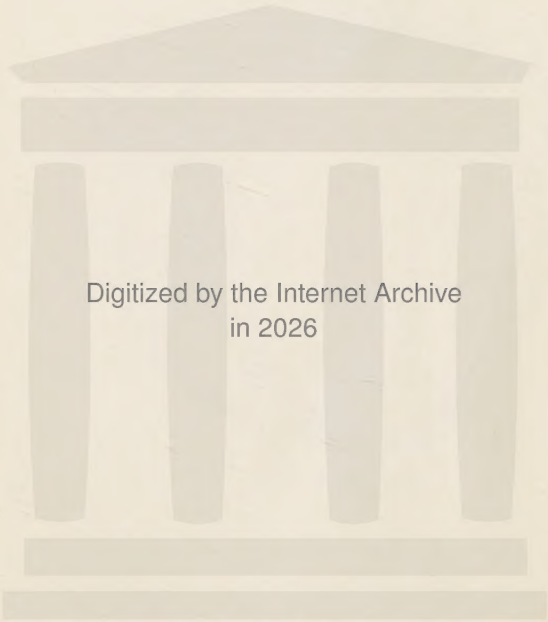
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The KINGS TREASURIES OF LITERATURE

GENERAL EDITOR
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TO

THE MEMORY OF

THOSE OF MY PUPILS WHO HAVE FALLEN IN THE WAR,

AND TO THE FORTITUDE OF THEIR PARENTS,

THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward. Had he his hurts before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!

Act V. Sc. viii. 39–47.

I.—EARLY SCOTTISH HISTORY

THE events in the play of *Macbeth* are represented as having occurred in Scotland during the first half of the eleventh century, a period of special interest and importance in the history of the country; and, as some of the episodes and characters in the play cannot be wholly understood without some knowledge of early Scottish history, it may be worth while to review very briefly the events which preceded those recorded in the story which we are presently to consider.

Scotland was not always, as we know it now, a united nation living in a well-defined territory; nor, indeed, before the tenth century was it known by its present name. In its early days it consisted of a number of separate tribes belonging at least to two and probably to three different races, and to gain much reliable information about the country as it was in those remote times is an exceedingly difficult matter. By the end of the sixth century, however, although intermissive warfare was still carried on among them, the tribes had so drawn together that it is possible to recognise four distinct peoples, each with its own king: (1) the Picts who occupied by far the greatest part of the country, their territory extending from the Firth of Forth to the north coast, whilst an isolated tribe of them dwelt in Galloway; (2) the Scots who came from Scotia (the modern

Ireland) and settled early in the sixth century in Dalriada, a district roughly comprising what is now Argyleshire and the adjacent islands; (3) the Angles who, after seizing the north-east coast of South Britain, spread northwards until they held all the land between the Humber and the Forth, including, therefore, the Lothians; and (4) the Brythons or Britons, whom the Anglian invaders pressed westwards and northwards into Cumbria which included the modern Cumberland and the " strath " or valley of the Clyde. Wars grim and ceaseless were waged among these peoples and made settled boundaries to the four kingdoms impossible, but a glance at a map will show in a general way the areas which they occupied.

Now the peculiar interest of the period immediately preceding that represented in the play lies in the fact that during it the four peoples became united under one ruler. In course of time, through a series of circumstances which need not be detailed here, the Picts and Scots first came under the rule of the same king, Kenneth MacAlpin, who made his capital at Scone; and when, a century and three-quarters later, in 1018, Malcolm II. by his victory at Carham drove the Angles out of Lothian, and in the same year succeeded in establishing his grandson, Duncan, as ruler over the Brythons of Strathclyde, he was, in name at least, king over the whole of the new Scotia or Scotland, as by this time the country had come to be called.

This consolidation was the more easily accomplished because of the attacks of a common foe against whom these peoples had to defend themselves. At the end of the eighth century Danes and Norwegians began to

harass the coasts of Britain, and as the next century advanced, their invasions became stronger and more frequent. They seized the Orkneys together with the outlying islands of the west coast, and gradually fought their way up the fiords well into the mainland of North Britain. There are records of their landings in Fife and elsewhere on the east coast, but the north and the west suffered most, and for nearly four hundred years a deep fringe of the mainland remained more or less continuously in the hands of these Scandinavian settlers. It was natural, therefore, that the four peoples, and especially the Picts and the Scots, should unite for defence against a foe so persistent and fierce.

In his efforts to bring the whole of the country under his control, Malcolm II. had to devise some means of arresting the encroachments of the Norsemen, and he seems to have gained some influence over them by marrying one of his daughters to their Jarl, Sigurd, who had made himself ruler of the Orkneys and had seized a portion of the north mainland. On the death of the Jarl, his son Thorfinn was appointed by Malcolm as Earl of Sutherland and Caithness, a step doubtless taken by the king to secure at once a measure of control over the Norsemen, and an ally who might be expected to keep a jealous watch on the neighbouring powerful province of Moray, which was always ready to dispute the royal authority.

It must be remembered, however, that such a consolidation of the peoples in Scotland as Malcolm was able to maintain, although a long step towards the unification of the nation, was not by any means so complete as might appear: the different races did not

readily intermix, feuds among the tribes still survived, and for many years Scotland was a kind of loose confederacy of provinces held together when the king was strong enough to hold them. Malcolm II. kept them together with a strong hand, but when, on his death, his grandson Duncan succeeded to the throne, he had not reigned many years before trouble began, for Duncan, however mild and gracious personally, however "clear in his great office" he may have been, certainly had not that strong type of character which the grim times demanded in a king. The Northumbrians invaded Strathclyde, and, later, the Norsemen began again to press their claims and to make fresh inroads; while in the province of Lochaber—so say the old chronicles, although modern historians dispute the statement—a serious rebellion broke out, headed by Macdonwald who drew additional forces both from Ireland and the western isles. Against the Norsemen and his rebellious subjects Duncan, according to tradition, sent his generals, Macbeth, the powerful "Mormaer" or Earl of Moray, and Banquo, whose campaigns are referred to in the opening scenes of the play.

Unfortunately the weakness of Duncan's position, due to his personal qualities, was increased by the fact that many people considered his claim to the throne unsound. The Pictish law of succession was different from that obtaining in most countries, where the son or grandson of the late monarch usually succeeds. According to the custom of the Picts the king must *never* be the son or grandson of the previous king: the crown passed to a brother, or, failing a

brother, to a *sister's* son. If the dead king had neither brothers nor sisters, the succession would pass to his predecessor's grandson. Now Malcolm II. had neither brothers nor sisters living at the time of his death, and the next legal heir had been murdered; but the latter had a sister named Gruoch, and her son Lulach was therefore the true successor to Malcolm. After her first husband's death Gruoch married Macbeth, who thus became the stepfather of the legitimate heir to the throne, a relationship which carried with it certain rights of regency until Lulach should come of age. Even if this had not been so, Macbeth on his own account, according to one story, might well have disputed the succession with Duncan. Malcolm II., it was said, had two daughters—besides the one who married Jarl Sigurd—Bethoc and Doada, of whom the former was the elder; Bethoc's son was King Duncan, and, so the legend runs, Macbeth was the son of Doada. According to this account, as both were grandsons of the late king, it is clear that Duncan had no more right to the throne than had his cousin Macbeth. It is important to remember this when presently we shall consider Macbeth's attitude to Duncan in the play.

We may now conclude this short outline of early Scottish history with a few words about the condition of the people who lived in Scotland at the time with which our play is concerned. Owing to the efforts of St. Columba, St. Mungo, St. Cuthbert, and other missionaries, Scotland had become by this time, in name at least, a Christian country, and had reached a fair degree of civilisation. The people built them-

selves houses, sometimes partially of stone, more generally, perhaps, of wood and earth; and although in most cases these would be roughly put together, their inhabitants no doubt lived comfortably enough within them. They could carve skilfully in wood and stone, and some of the designs in the examples of carving which have been preserved are very beautiful indeed. But they were a warlike people, always ready to fight, and often ruthless, fierce, and cruel. Most of them were ignorant so far as learning and scholarship were concerned, and they were very superstitious. They believed firmly in the magic arts, in sorcery and witchcraft, in charms and enchantments, signs, omens, and the like. For instance, they believed, we are told, that if a murderer approached the dead body of his victim, the corpse would again begin to bleed; and that if they stabbed or melted waxen images of their enemies, the latter would sicken and die. Such superstitions now appear to be very foolish, but faith in them lasted for many centuries, and in the time of Shakespeare belief in witchcraft and the magic arts was very widespread.

It is against this background, then, that Shakespeare displays the figures in his story of *Macbeth*.

II.—THE THEATRE IN THE TIME OF SHAKESPEARE

The methods employed in a drama are largely affected by the conditions of the stage for which it is written. Thus a play intended for a modern theatre with all

its elaborate scenery, stage machinery, and "properties" differs in many respects from one designed for performance in the time of Queen Elizabeth or James I. when Shakespeare lived; and it will be helpful for us, before beginning to study our play itself, to have some idea of what an Elizabethan theatre was like.

Nowadays our theatres are usually so built about, that we cannot see much of them from the outside, but those of Shakespeare's day stood up alone and could be seen from all sides. They were high buildings, generally either round or octagonal in shape,[1] and built for the most part of wood, although in James' reign brick began to be used for this purpose. The interior was generally circular, and open to the sky, except that the uppermost of the three tiers of galleries, which ran round the inside wall, was roofed with thatch or, in the later buildings, with tiles. Seats were provided in these galleries, but in the open yard or pit of the theatre, the audience had to stand.[2] Well out into the pit projected the stage, and above the latter, against the rear wall, the second or middle gallery was converted into a kind of balcony over-

[1] The Swan was twelve-sided and the first Fortune theatre was square.

[2] Seats were provided in the pits of the so-called "private" theatres which were conducted either in private rooms or in premises erected for or adapted to theatrical performances. In the latter case, though within the precincts of London, they were in places, like Blackfriars for instance, over which the Mayor of London had no jurisdiction at the time. These "private" theatres were roofed in, and were lit by candles. Like the public theatres they were served by professional companies, and a rather higher charge was made for admission than was the case in their "public" rivals.

looking the stage from the back. Adjoining this on either side, and partitioned off from the rest of the gallery, were "boxes" with special windows, which looked over the stage rather from the side, and from which a view of the inner stage might be obtained. High above the balcony, and visible from both the inside and the outside of the building, was the "hutch," a small rectangular house with a thatched or tiled roof from which a flag, bearing the device of the theatre, was flown on the days when plays were to be performed, and whence a trumpeter blew calls on his instrument shortly before the performance was timed to begin. The "hutch" was also useful when it was necessary for a god or goddess, for instance, to descend from the heights to the stage—a process effected by means of some kind of windlass concealed within the hutch. Beginning at the foot of this little house, a canopy or shade, roofed outside and ceiled within, stretched forward high over the stage, and was supported in the front, generally by pillars resting on the stage. The under side of this canopy did duty for the sky, and to it the actors doubtless turned their eyes or pointed, when in the course of the play they referred to the heavens. The supporting pillars also served in a measure to divide the main stage into two parts: the portion behind them covered by the "heavens," and that in front of them, open to the sky, and projecting into the pit. For convenience these may be referred to as the *middle* and the *front* stage respectively. At the back of the middle stage, and under the balcony, was a room-like recess known as the *rear* or *inner* stage; while under the gallery boxes, and on

either side of this inner stage, were dressing-rooms opening by doors on to the main stage and almost certainly communicating also by doors with the rear stage. So that four distinct places were available for use as stages:

(1) The front stage, which might be used for any vaguely described locality, such as "an open space," a street, etc.

(2) The middle stage, which might serve as a more definitely localised place, generally indoors—a council-chamber or banqueting-hall, for instance.

(3) The inner or rear stage, which did duty for any kind of recess or inner room, which had perhaps to be concealed for a time and only discovered at a certain point in the play. It might serve, for example, as a cave, a study, or an alcove.

(4) The upper stage or balcony, which was used for any raised place like the battlements of a castle, an upper window, or even a bed-chamber. When not required by the actors, it cou'd be occupied either by musicians or by privileged members of the audience.

In some theatres—the Swan, for example—the main stage could be removed altogether, when the building was to be used for purposes other than play-acting; but in others, like the Globe, the stage was a fixture. It is important to remember that the modern drop-curtain and drop-scene had no equivalents in the Elizabethan theatre. Curtains could be drawn across the front of the inner stage to separate it from the

outer stage for purposes of concealment, and the balcony was similarly equipped. It is possible that, when a play required it, an additional curtain of some kind might be arranged between the two pillars to separate the middle and the front stages, although the evidence of its use is not by any means clear. If a tragedy was to be performed, the hangings were of black; and if a comedy, brighter-coloured arras cloth was substituted.

The arrangements we have described affected the construction of the plays in several ways. The absence of any elaborate scenery and "properties," for example, gave the dramatist almost unrestricted freedom as to the number of scenes which he might introduce. If the reader will presently count the scenes in *Macbeth*, for instance, he will find that there are many more than would be admissible in a modern play, where they are generally longer and fewer; and, indeed, in a modern performance of a Shakespearean play, the stage-manager sometimes finds it necessary to combine short scenes, when they occur in succession, to avoid the interruptions and delays which would ensue, if each scene of a series were to be separated from the others by a change of stage settings or the fall of the curtain. There was no such difficulty in the Elizabethan theatre: the audience had only to be informed that the scene had changed, the actors simply left the stage and re-entered, and imagination did the rest.

Again, the absence of any form of drop-curtain, which could shut off the whole of the stage from the view of the audience, had very distinct effects on the structure of the Elizabethan play. It is a favourite

device of the modern dramatist in his final scene to bring together on the stage as many as possible of the characters who have appeared in the course of the action, and to finish the play by dropping the curtain when the assembly is complete. In the Elizabethan drama it is obvious that there could be no such ending: at the close of each scene the stage must be empty, and in concluding his play the dramatist had always to provide for the *exits* of his characters, living or dead. It is interesting in the reading of a play to examine the dialogue and the stage-directions with the view of noting exactly how such provision was made.

Further results of the stage conditions of the time on dramatic construction will become apparent as the play is studied, and it will furnish an excellent exercise for the reader to detect these as his reading proceeds.

TABLE OF CHARACTERS

DUNCAN I., King of Scotland (1035–40), related to both Lord and Lady Macbeth, and married to the sister of Siward, Earl of Northumberland. An elderly man, fair complexioned, and of mild and gracious manners.

Note.—The King of England at the time of Duncan's accession was the famous King Cnut, who died, however, in the following year. He was succeeded by his sons, Harold and Harthacnut, and following them came Edward the Confessor, who is referred to in the play.

MALCOLM
DONALBAIN } Duncan's sons, of whom Malcolm was the elder.

MACBETH, Mormaer (a noble of almost princely rank) of Moray; son of Sinel, thane of Glamis; first cousin to Duncan; general of the King's army, and, later, King of Scotland. A man of great bodily strength, and with an unusually expressive face.

LADY MACBETH (named Gruoch), wife of Macbeth, and third cousin of Duncan. Before her marriage with Macbeth, she was the widow of a former Mormaer of Moray, Gilcomgain, the father of her son Lulach. Slight of stature, but dignified and queenly in appearance.

BANQUO, thane of Lochaber, Macbeth's fellow general, sharing with him the command of the royal forces.

FLEANCE, son to Banquo.

MACDUFF, thane of Fife, and a stalwart soldier.

LADY MACDUFF, his wife.

A Boy, their son.

LENNOX
ROSS
MENTEITH
ANGUS
CAITHNESS } nobles of Scotland.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, and general of the English forces. Uncle to Malcolm and Donalbain, and brother-in-law to Duncan.

YOUNG SIWARD, his son, cousin to the princes.

SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.

A Sergeant. Not the non-commissioned officer of our time, but a feudal soldier next in rank to an esquire, and belonging to a guard specially appointed to attend the person of the king.

An English Doctor.

A Scotch Doctor.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

HECATE (usually pronounced as three syllables, but in the play as two), a mysterious deity, goddess of the moon and especially of the darkened portions when it was waxing or waning; queen of the underworld; and a goddess who presided over all sorcery and witchcraft, magic spells and enchantments. She was supposed to have power to send up shades and demons from the underworld, and accompanied by troops of such phantoms and by two black dogs, was to be seen on moonlight nights where cross-roads met. There the ancient Greeks sacrificed black dogs and lambs to her, and left for her dishes of fish and eggs. It was as chief goddess of witchcraft that she was best known to the superstitions of the Middle Ages.

Three Witches, wildly attired, and with withered faces, beards, skinny lips, and long, " choppy " fingers.

Apparitions.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants, and Messengers.

SCENE: *Act IV. Sc. iii. in England: elsewhere throughout the play in Scotland.*

THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH

ACT FIRST

SCENE I

A desert place

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

First Witch. When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?
Sec. Witch. When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.
Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.
First Witch. Where the place?
Sec. Witch. Upon the heath.
Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.
First Witch. I come, Graymalkin.
All. Paddock calls:—anon!
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt.*

8–9. *Graymalkin.* A gray cat. *Paddock.* A toad. Favourite forms taken by the attendant spirits or "familiars" of the witches.

10. *Fair is foul, and foul is fair.* What is fair, physically and morally, to others, is foul to the witches, and *vice versa.*

Scene II

A camp near Forres

Alarum within. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Sergeant.

Dun. What bloody man is that? He can report,
As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The newest state.
Mal. This is the sergeant
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought
'Gainst my captivity. Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the broil
As thou didst leave it.
Ser. Doubtful it stood;
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villanies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the western isles
Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;
And fortune, on his wretched quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's lass; but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carved out his passage

3. *Newest.* Latest.
10. *For to that.* To that end.
13. *Kerns and gallowglasses.* Irish troops; the former lightly armed foot soldiers, the latter more heavily armed.
14. *Quarrel.* Cause.

Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Dun. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Ser. As whence the sun 'gins his reflection
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these skipping kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
With furbish'd arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

Dun. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Ser. Yes;
As sparrows eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks; so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorise another Golgotha,
I cannot tell—
But I am faint; my gashes cry for help.

22. *Unseam'd him . . . the chaps.* Ripped him open from the middle to the jaws.

25–28. *As whence . . . swells.* As storms often spring up in the east at dawn, so a fresh assault seemed to issue out of Macbeth's victory—so quickly did the one follow the other.

37. *Overcharged . . . cracks.* Loaded with double charges, so that they gave a doubly loud report.

40. *Golgotha.* By the slaughter of their enemies make the place another Golgotha, as memorable as that of the Scriptures.

Dun. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.
[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*
Who comes here?

Enter Ross.

Mal. The worthy thane of Ross.
Len. What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.
Ross. God save the king!
Dun. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?
Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
And fan our people cold. Norway himself
With terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.
Dun. Great happiness!
Ross. That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, craves composition;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colme's inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

54. *Bellona.* Roman goddess of war. *Proof.* Impenetrable armour.
59. *Composition.* Terms of peace. 61. *Inch.* Islet.

Dun. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest: go pronounce his present death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.
Ross. I'll see it done.
Dun. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene III

A heath

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?
Sec. Witch. Killing swine.
Third Witch. Sister, where thou?
First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd.
"Give me," quoth I:
"Aroint thee, witch!" the rump-fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.
Sec. Witch. I'll give thee a wind.
First Witch. Thou'rt kind.
Third Witch. And I another.
First Witch. I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card.

6. *Aroint thee.* Begone. *Ronyon.* Scurvy creature.
9. *Like.* In the form of. 15. *Blow.* Blow into.

I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost.
Look what I have.

Sec. Witch. Show me, show me.

First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come. [*Drum within.*

Third Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Ban. How far is 't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying

20. *Pent-house lid.* Eyelid sloping over his eye like the roof of a lean-to outhouse.

38. *Fair.* Possibly because of his victory.

Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

Sec. Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter!

Ban. Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace and great prediction
Of noble having and of royal hope,
That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

First Witch. Hail!

Sec. Witch. Hail!

Third Witch. Hail!

First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Sec. Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

55–56. *Present . . . hope.* He refers in order to the three titles given Macbeth by the witches.

67. *Get.* Beget.

First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!
Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You owe this strange intelligence? or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you.
[*Witches vanish.*
Ban. The earth hath bubbles as the water has,
And these are of them: whither are they vanish'd?
Macb. Into the air, and what seem'd corporal melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!
Ban. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner?
Macb. Your children shall be kings.
Ban You shall be king.
Macb. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?
Ban. To the selfsame tune and words. Who's here?

Enter Ross and Angus.

Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads

73. *A prosperous gentleman.* Macbeth had evidently left the field before Cawdor's treachery (I. ii. 52–53) was revealed. Cawdor had probably not been fighting openly in Sweno's forces: otherwise there would have been no need for his later confession of treason (I. iv. 5).

84. *Insane root.* Hemlock, or henbane.

90–93. *When he reads . . . silenced with that.* Duncan thinks (1) that *he* is entitled to wonder greatly at Macbeth's amazing exploits, and (2) that Macbeth deserves all the praises

Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend
Which should be thine or his: silenced with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came post with post, and every one did bear
Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

Ang. We are sent
To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
Only to herald thee into his sight,
Not pay thee.

Ross. And for an earnest of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor.
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
For it is thine.

Ban. What, can the devil speak true?

Macb. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

Ang. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgement bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and proved,
Have overthrown him.

that a king can give. These two rival thoughts contend for the possession of Duncan's mind, and his helplessness in the face of this dispute renders him silent.

Macb. [*Aside.*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:
The greatest is behind.—Thanks for your pains.—
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?
Ban. That, trusted home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
In deepest consequence.
Cousins, a word, I pray you.
Macb. [*Aside.*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
[*Aside.*] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

120. *Home.* To the uttermost.
140–141. *Function . . . surmise.* My power of thinking and acting is smothered by surmises as to the future.

Ban. Look, how our partner's rapt.
Macb. [*Aside.*] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.
Ban. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, cleave not to their mould
But with the aid of use.
Macb. [*Aside.*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.
Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.
Macb. Give me your favour: my dull brain was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them. Let us toward the king.
Think upon what hath chanced, and at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.
Ban. Very gladly.
Macb. Till then, enough. Come, friends. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

Forres. The palace

Flourish. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Lennox, and Attendants.

Dun. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

147. *Time . . . roughest day.* Even the day most thickly beset with troubles must end at last, and will provide, in its course, the hour of opportunity.
149. *Wrought.* Disturbed.

Mal. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die, who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness' pardon and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death,
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As 'twere a careless trifle.
Dun. There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter Macbeth, Banquo, Ross, and Angus.

O worthiest cousin!
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me: thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the proportion both of thanks and payment
Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.
Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.

27. *Safe . . . honour.* That tends to ensure you love and honour.

Dun. Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so: let me infold thee
And hold thee to my heart.
Ban. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.
Dun. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.
Macb. The rest is labour, which is not used for you:
I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So humbly take my leave.
Dun. My worthy Cawdor!
Macb. [*Aside.*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:

28. *Plant thee.* By giving him Cawdor's title.
44. *The rest . . . you.* Repose, when it is not devoted to your service, is like labour to me.

The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*

Dun. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let's after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

Scene V

Inverness. Macbeth's castle

Enter Lady Macbeth, reading a letter.

Lady M. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor'; by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 10
'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

7. *Missives.* Messengers.

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The illness should attend it: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries "Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do
Than wishest should be undone." Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Mess. The king comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were 't so,
Would have inform'd for preparation.

Mess. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the speed of him,

22. *Illness.* Disposition to evil.
31. *Metaphysical.* Supernatural.
31–32. *Doth seem . . . withal.* Doth seem to have already crown'd thee.

Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady M. Give him tending;
He brings great news. [*Exit Messenger.*
The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Enter Macbeth.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macb. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady M. And when goes hence?

51. *Sightless.* Invisible.

Macb. To-morrow, as he purposes.
Lady M. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under 't. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my dispatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.
Macb. We will speak further.
Lady M. Only look up clear;
To alter favour ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VI

Before Macbeth's castle

Hautboys and torches. Enter Duncan, Malcolm, Donalbain, Banquo, Lennox, Macduff, Ross, Angus, and Attendants.

Dun. This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve

70. *Dispatch.* Management.
Hautboys. Wind-instruments like a flute.
3. *Gentle.* Soothed—the effect of the air upon them.

By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendant bed and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Dun. See, see, our honour'd hostess!
The love that follows us sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God 'ild us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

Lady M. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits.

Dun. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We coursed him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well,
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us. Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

7. *Coign of vantage.* Suitable corner.

13–14. *'Ild us . . . trouble.* Reward (='ild=yield) me for causing you "pains" and "trouble," because by doing so I am showing my love for you.

20. *Rest . . . hermits.* We remain your beadsmen, bound to pray for you as king.

22. *Purveyor.* One sent in advance, generally to provide food.

Lady M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Dun. Give me your hand;
Conduct me to mine host: we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VII

Macbeth's castle

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, and divers Servants with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter Macbeth.

Macb. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,

26. *In compt.* Subject to rendering an account of them.
27. *To make their audit.* To present their accounts.
Sewer. An upper servant who arranged the dishes on the table.
1. *Done* (1). Done with.
3–7. *Trammel . . . life to come.* If the crime could, as it were, entangle (=trammel up) its consequences in its own net so that they would be arrested, and successfully attain its object with Duncan's death (=his surcease); if only the striking of this blow would settle the matter entirely, so far as this life—this mere shoal-like strip of time in the sea of eternity—is concerned, we would [do the deed and] take our chance in the life to come.

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,
We'ld jump the life to come. But in these cases
We still have judgement here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught return
To plague the inventor: this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking-off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

How now! what news?

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: why have you left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady M. Know you not he has?

8. *That.* So that.
17. *Faculties.* Kingly powers.
22. *Cherubin.* Cherubim.
23. *Sightless.* Invisible.
26. *Prick the sides.* Stimulate.

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

Macb. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady M. What beast was 't then
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

32. *Bought.* Won.

45. *Cat . . . adage.* The proverb: "The cate would eate fishe and would not wet her feete."

50. *To be more than what you were.* In order to be king.

I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Macb. If we should fail?

Lady M. We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbec only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,
What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan? what not put upon
His spongy officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great quell?

Macb. Bring forth men-children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done 't?

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death?

64. *Wassail.* Revelling. *Convince.* Overpower.
66. *Fume.* Like a vapour. *Receipt.* Receptacle.
67. *Limbec.* An alembic, into which the fumes will rise. The receptacle of reason, it was believed in olden times, was above the region of memory, in the brain.

Macb. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT SECOND

Scene I

Inverness. Court of Macbeth's castle

Enter Banquo, and Fleance bearing a torch before him.

Ban. How goes the night, boy?
Fle. The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
Ban. And she goes down at twelve.
Fle. I take 't, 'tis later, sir.
Ban. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take thee that too.
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose!

Enter Macbeth, and a Servant with a torch.

Give me my sword.
Who's there?
Macb. A friend.

4. *Husbandry.* Economy.

Ban. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your offices:
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.
Macb. Being unprepared,
Our will became the servant to defect,
Which else should free have wrought.
Ban. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.
Macb. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.
Ban. At your kind'st leisure.
Macb. If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you.
Ban. So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsell'd.

14. *Offices.* Servants' quarters.
16. *Shut up.* Is wrapped.
17–19. *Being . . . wrought.* We should have liked to make ampler preparation: as it was, the deficiencies in the king's entertainment could not be helped because of the short notice we had of his coming.
25. *If you shall, etc.* If you will fall in with my plans, and throw in your lot with mine, when it [*i.e.* the crowning, uppermost in Macbeth's mind when he spoke above of "that business"] comes to pass, etc.
28. *Bosom franchised.* Conscience free.

Macb. Good repose the while!
Ban. Thanks, sir: the like to you!
[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*
Macb. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.
[*Exit Servant.*
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade and dudgeon gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse

44. *Made the fools.* Laughing-stock, *i.e.*, because they (the eyes) see what is not really there.
45. *Worth all the rest.* Because they see a real dagger that the other senses cannot perceive.
46. *Dudgeon.* Handle.
48. *Informs.* Takes form.

The curtain'd sleep; witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. 61
[*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [*Exit.*

51–52. *Celebrates . . . offerings.* Makes offerings to Hecate (who under the name of Diana was goddess of the Moon, and, therefore, "pale").

54. *Howl's his watch.* His (murder's) means of telling the time of night.

55. *Tarquin's ravishing strides.* As Sextus Tarquinius, son of the last of the legendary kings of Rome, stealthily strode to assault Lucretia, for which deed the king was expelled from Rome.

59. *And take . . . time.* By breaking the awful silence. The subject to "take" is, of course, "stones."

60. *It*=the time.

Scene II

The same

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath quench'd them hath given me fire. Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open, and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.
Macb. [*Within.*] Who 's there? what, ho!
Lady M. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done 't.

Enter Macbeth.

My husband!
Macb. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

3. *The fatal bellman.* A night-watchman sent in olden times to condemned persons the night before their execution.
7. *Possets.* Evening drinks made by mixing several ingredients.
11–12. *The attempt . . . us.* The attempt without its accomplishment (the deed) ruins us.

Lady M. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?
Macb. When?
Lady M. Now.
Macb. As I descended?
Lady M. Ay.
Macb. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?
Lady M. Donalbain.
Macb. This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.*
Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.
Macb. There's one did laugh in 's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep.
Lady M. There are two lodged together.
Macb. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:
Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
When they did say "God bless us!"
Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.
Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.
Lady M. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
Macb. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep"—the innocent sleep,

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

Lady M. What do you mean?

Macb. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more."

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on 't again I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macb. Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood

37. *Ravell'd sleave.* Tangled floss-silk, usually in knotted skeins.

Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Re-enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knocking within.*] I hear
a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it then! Your constancy
Hath left you unattended. [*Knocking within.*]
Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.
Macb. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself.
[*Knocking within.*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou
couldst! [*Exeunt.*

63. *One red.* One uniform red. Note that *green* and *red* are both nouns.

69. *Unattended.* Your firmness has forsaken you.

70. *Nightgown.* Dressing-gown.

73. *To know . . . myself.* While thinking [to know=knowing] of my deed, I had better be lost in my thoughts, so that I may not know myself the doer of it.

Scene III

The same

Enter a Porter. Knocking within.

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he should have old turning the key. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub? Here's a farmer, that hanged himself on th' expectation of plenty: come in time; have napkins enow about you; here you'll sweat for 't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in th' other devil's name? Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have

2. *Old.* More than enough of.

5. *Th' expectation of plenty.* Owing to his expectation of plenty and his being disappointed, perhaps by a fall in the price of corn.

6. *Napkins.* Handkerchiefs.

10–11. *Equivocator . . . scale.* One who believes in equivocation and who could commit deliberate perjury.

16. *Hose.* Breeches.

17. *Roast your goose.* Heat your pressing-iron.

let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] Anon, anon! I pray you, remember the porter.

[*Opens the gate.*

Enter Macduff and Lennox.

Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?
Port. Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock.
Macd. Is thy master stirring?

Enter Macbeth.

Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.
Len. Good morrow, noble sir.
Macb. Good morrow, both,
Macd. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?
Macb. Not yet.
Macd. He did command me to call timely on him:
I have almost slipp'd the hour.
Macb. I'll bring you to him.
Macd. I know this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet 'tis one.
Macb. The labour we delight in physics pain.
This is the door.
Macd. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service. [*Exit.*
Len. Goes the king hence to-day?
Macb. He does: he did appoint so.

23. *Anon.* Coming immediately.
26. *The second cock.* About three o'clock A.M.
38. *Limited.* Appointed.

Len. The night has been unruly: where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible
Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatch'd to the woful time: the obscure bird
Clamoured the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous and did shake.

Macb. 'Twas a rough night.

Len. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

Re-enter Macduff.

Macd. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee.

Macb. } What's the matter?
Len. }

Macd. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece.
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building.

Macb. What is 't you say? the life?

Len. Mean you his majesty?

Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak, yourselves.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.*

44–45. *Dire combustion . . . time.* The dire social disturbances (conflagration=combustion) and confusion which the unhappy age (prophesied about) would give birth to.

52. *Confusion.* Destruction.

58. *Gorgon.* Medusa, whose head turned to stone all who looked upon it.

Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this downy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The great doom's image! Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror. Ring the bell.

[*Bell rings.*

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Lady M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

Macd. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter Banquo.

O Banquo, Banquo!
Our royal master's murder'd.

Lady M. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

Ban. Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

Re-enter Macbeth and Lennox, with Ross.

Macb. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant

64. *Great doom's image.* The picture of the Last Judgment.
66. *To countenance.* To be in keeping with.

There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter Malcolm and Donalbain.

Don. What is amiss?
Macb. You are, and do not know 't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.
Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.
Mal. O, by whom?
Len. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done 't:
Their hands and faces were all badged with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.
Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.
Macd. Wherefore did you so?
Macb. Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin laced with his golden blood,
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers

81. *Mortality.* Human life.
98. *The pauser.* That which makes to pause.

Unmannerly breech'd with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make 's love known?

Lady M. Help me hence, ho!

Macd. Look to the lady.

Mal. [*Aside to Don.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours?

Don. [*Aside to Mal.*] What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an auger-hole, may rush, and seize us?
Let's away;
Our tears are not yet brew'd.

Mal. [*Aside to Don.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.

Ban. Look to the lady:

[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*

And when we have our naked frailties hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence I fight
Of treasonous malice.

Macd. And so do I.

All. So all.

103. *Breech'd.* Covered (as with breeches).
107. *Argument.* Theme.
109. *Auger-hole.* A hole pierced by a joiner's auger, *i.e.* a dagger-hole, as had been the case with Duncan.
112. *Upon the foot of motion.* Ready to act.
113. *Naked frailties hid.* Put on more clothes, *i.e.* because of the cold.
118. *The undivulged pretence.* Secret aims.

Macb. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.
All. Well contented.
[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*
Mal. What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.
Don. To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.
Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

Outside Macbeth's castle

Enter Ross with an old Man.

Old M. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange, but this sore night
Hath trifled former knowings.

120. *Put on manly readiness.* Arm ourselves and prepare for action against any further treason.

127. *The near . . . bloody.* The nearer in kinship, the more likely to commit a bloody deed. (He suspects Macbeth, their father's cousin.)

4. *Trifled.* Made as trifles.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is 't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it?
Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last
A falcon towering in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.
Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.
Old M. 'Tis said they eat each other.
Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon 't.

Enter Macduff.

Here comes the good Macduff.
How goes the world, sir, now?
Macd. Why, see you not?
Ross. Is 't known who did this more than bloody deed?
Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.
Ross. Alas, the day!
What good could they pretend?
Macd. They were suborn'd:

15. *Minions.* The most prized specimens.
24. *Pretend.* Aim at.

Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled, which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.
Ross. 'Gainst nature still:
Thriftless ambition, that wilt ravin up
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.
Macd. He is already named, and gone to Scone
To be invested.
Ross. Where is Duncan's body?
Macd. Carried to Colme-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors
And guardian of their bones.
Ross. Will you to Scone?
Macd. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.
Ross. Well, I will thither.
Macd. Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!
Ross. Farewell, father.
Old M. God's benison go with you and with those
That would make good of bad and friends of foes!
[*Exeunt.*

28. *Ravin up.* Greedily devour.
34. *Storehouse.* Burial-place.

ACT THIRD

Scene I

Forres. The palace

Enter Banquo.

Ban. Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for 't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

Sennet sounded. Enter Macbeth, as king; Lady Macbeth, as queen; Lennox, Ross, Lords, Ladies, and Attendants.

Macb. Here's our chief guest.
Lady M. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And all-thing unbecoming.
Macb. To-night we hold a solemn supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.
Ban. Let your highness
Command upon me, to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

Sennet. Trumpet-call given as a signal.
13. *All-thing.* Altogether.

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?
Ban. Ay, my good lord.
Macb. We should have else desired your good advice,
Which still hath been both grave and prosperous,
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is 't far you ride?
Ban. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.
Macb. Fail not our feast.
Ban. My lord, I will not.
Macb. We hear our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: but of that to-morrow,
When therewithal we shall have cause of state
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?
Ban. Ay, my good lord: our time does call upon 's.
Macb. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [*Exit Banquo.*
Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!
[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and an Attendant.*
Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men
Our pleasure?
Attend. They are, my lord, without the palace-gate.

34. *Cause of state.* State business.

Macb. Bring them before us. [*Exit Attendant.*

To be thus is nothing;
But to be safely thus: our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares,
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear: and under him
My Genius is rebuked, as it is said
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If 't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine eternal jewel
Given to the common enemy of man,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And champion me to the utterance! Who's there?

48–49. *To be thus . . . safely thus.* To be king is nothing, but to be safely thus [is everything].

52. *To.* Added to.

56. *My Genius.* The Spirit watching over my career.

57. *Cæsar.* Octavius Cæsar.

65. *Filed.* Defiled.

68. *Eternal jewel.* Immortal soul.

72. *Champion . . . utterance.* Fight *against* me in single combat to the death (*à outrance*).

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.
[*Exit Attendant.*
Was it not yesterday we spoke together?
First Mur. It was, so please your highness.
Macb. Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune, which you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference; pass'd in probation with you,
How you were borne in hand, how cross'd, the instruments,
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion crazed
Say "Thus did Banquo."
First Mur. You made it known to us.
Macb. I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd,
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
And beggar'd yours for ever?
First Mur. We are men, my liege.

80. *Pass'd . . . with you.* Proved to you point by point.
81. *Borne in hand.* Led on by false encouragement.
Cross'd. Thwarted.
83. *Notion.* Mind.
88. *So gospell'd.* So much under the influence of gospel-teaching as to pray, etc.

Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves, are clept
All by the name of dogs: the valued file
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed, whereby he does receive
Particular addition, from the bill
That writes them all alike: and so of men.
Now if you have a station in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say it,
And I will put that business in your bosoms
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.
Sec. Mur. I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incensed that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.
First Mur. And I another
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on 't.

92. *Catalogue.* General list.
94. *Shoughs, water-rugs and demi-wolves.* Shaggy-haired dogs, rough-haired water-dogs and crossbreeds between dog and wolf.
Clept. Called.
95. *The valued file.* The schedule showing the values
97. *The housekeeper.* Watchdog.
100. *Particular addition.* Mark of distinction.
107. *Wear our health, etc.* Who, so long as he is alive, live under the continual threat of danger.

Macb. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.
Both Mur. True, my lord.
Macb. So is he mine, and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: and though I could
With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Who I myself struck down: and thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.
Sec. Mur. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.
First Mur. Though our lives—
Macb. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time,
The moment on 't; for 't must be done to-night,
And something from the palace; always thought
That I require a clearness: and with him—
To leave no rubs nor botches in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose absence is no less material to me

121. *For.* Because of.
130. *Spy o' the time.* The exact moment [when Banquo may be expected to appear] as found out by spying.
132. *Something.* Some distance.
Always thought. It being always remembered.
133. *A clearness.* From suspicion.

Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
Of that dark hour. Resolve yourselves apart:
I'll come to you anon.
Both Mur. We are resolved, my lord.
Macb. I'll call upon you straight: abide within. 140
[*Exeunt Murderers.*
It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exit.*

Scene II

The palace

Enter Lady Macbeth and a Servant.

Lady M. Is Banquo gone from court?
Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.
Lady M. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.
Serv. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*
Lady M. Nought's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content:
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter Macbeth.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making; 9
Using those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: what's done is done.

10. *Using.* Cherishing. 11. *All.* Any.
12. *Without regard.* Beyond being thought of.

Macb. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy. Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further.
Lady M. Come on;
Gentle my lord, sleek o'er your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.
Macb. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance apply to Banquo;
Present him eminence, both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,

13. *Scotch'd.* Slashed.
14. *Close.* Heal.
16. *But let the frame . . . suffer.* But let the framework of the whole universe fall to pieces—both the heavens and the earth.
22. *Ecstasy.* Frenzy.
30. *Remembrance.* Reminder (line 28).
31. *Present him eminence.* Pay special attention to him as a distinguished guest.
32–33. *Unsafe . . . streams.* While we, insecure in our new positions, must keep our dignities free from suspicion by bathing them in these streams of flattery.

And make our faces visards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.
Lady M. You must leave this.
Macb. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.
Lady M. But in them nature's copy's not eterne.
Macb. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund: ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.
Lady M. What's to be done?
Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt.*

38. *Nature's copy's not eterne.* Their tenure of life from nature is copyhold, *i.e.* not permanent.
42. *Shard-borne.* Borne on scaly wings.
46. *Seeling.* Eye-closing.
49. *Great bond.* The "copyhold tenure" by which Banquo holds his life.
51. *Rooky.* Murky.

Scene III

A park near the palace

Enter three Murderers.

First Mur. But who did bid thee join with us?
Third Mur. Macbeth.
Sec. Mur. He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers
Our offices, and what we have to do,
To the direction just.
First Mur. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn, and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
Third Mur. Hark! I hear horses.
Ban. [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho!
Sec. Mur. Then 'tis he: the rest
That are within the note of expectation
Already are i' the court.
First Mur. His horses go about.
Third Mur. Almost a mile: but he does usually—
So all men do—from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.
Sec. Mur. A light, a light!

Enter Banquo, and Fleance with a torch.

Third Mur. 'Tis he.
First Mur. Stand to 't.

2. *He needs . . . mistrust.* We need not mistrust him.
Delivers. Reports.
10. *Within . . . expectation.* On the list (=note) of those expected.

Ban. It will be rain to-night.
First Mur. Let it come down.
[*They set upon Banquo.*
Ban. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!
Thou mayst revenge. O slave! [*Dies. Fleance escapes.*
Third Mur. Who did strike out the light?
First Mur. Was 't not the way?
Third Mur. There's but one down; the son is fled.
Sec. Mur. We have lost 20
Best half of our affair.
First Mur. Well, let's away and say how much is done.
[*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

Hall in the palace

A banquet prepared. Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords, and Attendants.

Macb. You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last a hearty welcome.
Lords. Thanks to your majesty.
Macb. Ourself will mingle with society
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time
We will require her welcome.
Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends,
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

5. *Keeps her state.* [Chair of] state.
6. *Require her welcome.* Request her to bid you welcome.

Enter first Murderer to the door.

Macb. See, they encounter thee with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst:
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round. [*Approaching the door.*] There's blood upon thy face.
Mur. 'Tis Banquo's then.
Macb. 'Tis better thee without than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?
Mur. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.
Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.
Mur. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scaped.
Macb. [*Aside.*] Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad and general as the casing air:
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.—But Banquo's safe?
Mur. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty trenched gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

14. *'Tis better . . . within.* It is better to have you—even though you are a blood-stained murderer—standing there (*i.e. without* the room) than have Banquo alive and in the room.
19. *Nonpareil.* Unequalled.
23. *Casing air.* The surrounding air.

Macb. Thanks for that.
[*Aside.*] There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit Murderer.*
Lady M. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a-making,
'Tis given with welcome: to feed were best at home;
From thence the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.
Macb. Sweet remembrancer!
Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!
Len. May 't please your highness sit.
[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.*
Macb. Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
Were the graced person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!
Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please 't your highness
To grace us with your royal company.
Macb. The table's full.
Len. Here is a place reserved, sir.
Macb. Where?
Len. Here, my good lord. What is 't that moves your highness?
Macb. Which of you have done this?
Lords. What, my good lord?

29. *The worm.* Serpent, *i.e.* Fleance.

Macb. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.
Ross. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.
Lady M. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;
The fit is momentary; upon a thought
He will again be well: if much you note him,
You shall offend him and extend his passion:
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?
Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.
Lady M. O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the air-drawn dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws and starts,
Impostors to true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.
Macb. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites. [*Exit Ghost.*
Lady M. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

60. *Proper stuff.* Mere nonsense.
63. *Flaws.* Gusts (of fear).
64. *Impostors to.* Compared with.
66. *Authorized by.* Vouched for.
72. *Monuments.* Tombs.
73. *Maws.* Stomachs.

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.
Lady M. Fie, for shame!
Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere humane statute purged the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.
Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.
Macb. I do forget.
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all and him we thirst,
And all to all.
Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost.

Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;

76. *Purged the gentle weal.* Purged the commonwealth [of violence] and made it gentle.
85. *Muse.* Wonder.
92. *All* (1). All good wishes.

Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.
Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.
Macb. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery, hence! [*Exit Ghost.*
Why, so: being gone,
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.
Lady M. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most admired disorder.
Macb. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

95. *Speculation.* Light of intelligence.
101. *Hyrcan tiger.* From Hyrcania, a district S. and S.E. of the Caspian Sea.
105. *Inhabit.* Stay at home.
110. *Admired.* Wonder-provoking.
111. *Overcome.* Pass over.
112–13. *You make . . . I owe.* I hardly understand my own nature.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him: at once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.

Len. Good night; and better health
Attend his majesty!

Lady M. A kind good night to all!

[*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Lady M.*

Macb. It will have blood: they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak;
Augures and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood. What is the night?

Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is which.

Macb. How say'st thou, that Macduff denies his person
At our great bidding?

Lady M. Did you send to him, sir?

Macb. I hear it by the way, but I will send:
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow,
And betimes I will, to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own good
All causes shall give way: I am in blood

119. *Stand not upon.* Do not be particular about.

124–26. *Augures and . . . of blood.* Divination by omens and "the putting of two and two together" have by means even of such things as magpies, jackdaws, and rooks, exposed murderers who did their deeds in the utmost secrecy.

136. *Causes.* Considerations.

Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:
Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.
Lady M. You lack the season of all natures, sleep.
Macb. Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self-abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use:
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V

A heath

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, meeting Hecate.

First Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.
Hec. Have I not reason, beldams as you are,
Saucy and over-bold? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The close contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a wayward son,
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.

141. *The season.* That which preserves.
142–43. *My strange . . . use.* My strange self-delusion is the fear of a beginner in crime.
2. *Beldams.* Hags. 11. *Wayward son.* Macbeth.

But make amends now: get you gone,
And at the pit of Acheron
Meet me i' the morning: thither he
Will come to know his destiny:
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end:
Great business must be wrought ere noon:
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
And that distill'd by magic sleights
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion:
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear:
And you all know security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song within: "Come away, come away," etc.*

Hark! I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit.*

First Witch. Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be back again. [*Exeunt.*

15. *Pit of Acheron.* Some gloomy spot in the neighbourhood, dark as Acheron (River of Anguish), one of the rivers of the lower world, and known to the witches by this name.

24. *Drop profound.* A low-hanging drop of a kind of foam believed in ancient times to fall on certain herbs, making the latter suitable for magic.

32. *Security.* Over-confidence.

Scene VI

Forres. The palace

Enter Lennox and another Lord.

Len. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret farther: only I say
Things have been strangely borne. The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth: marry, he was dead:
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if 't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled: men must not walk too late.
Who cannot want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny 't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key—
As, an 't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from broad words, and 'cause he fail'd

3. *Borne.* Carried out [by Macbeth].
8. *Want the thought.* Who can help thinking.
10. *Fact.* Deed.
21. *From broad words.* On account of plain speaking.

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect. Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
That by the help of these, with Him above
To ratify the work, we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage and receive free honours:
All which we pine for now: and this report
Hath so exasperate the king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Len. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did: and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say "You'll rue the time
That clogs me with this answer."

Len. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance

27. *Edward, i.e.* the Confessor.
29. *Takes from his high respect.* The high respect paid to him.
30. *Upon his aid.* To come to his (Malcolm's) aid.
35. *Free . . . knives.* To get the sense transfer *from* to before *bloody*.
38. *Exasperate.* Exasperated.
41. *Cloudy.* Sullen, frowning.

His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come, that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our suffering country
Under a hand accursed!
Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT FOURTH

Scene I

A cavern. In the middle, a boiling cauldron

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.
Sec. Witch. Thrice and once the hedge-pig whined.
Third Witch. Harpier cries " 'Tis time, 'tis time."
First Witch. Round about the cauldron go:
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights has thirty one
Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.
All. Double, double toil and trouble; 10
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Sec. Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;

48. *Suffering country.* Country suffering.
1. *Brinded.* Striped like a tiger.
3. *Harpier.* The name of a demon.

Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches' mummy, maw and gulf
Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock digg'd i' the dark,
Liver of blaspheming Jew,
Gall of goat and slips of yew
Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.
All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble.
Sec. Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter Hecate to the other three Witches.

Hec. O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains:
And now about the cauldron sing,

23. *Maw and gulf.* Stomach and gullet.
24. *Ravin'd.* Ravenous.
28. *Sliver'd.* Stripped off lengthwise.
30. *Slab.* Slimy.
31. *Chaudron.* Entrails.

Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.
[*Music and a song: "Black spirits," etc.*
[*Hecate retires.*

Sec. Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes:
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is 't you do?
All. A deed without a name.
Macb. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodged and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.
First Witch. Speak.
Sec. Witch. Demand.
Third Witch. We'll answer.

53. *Corn be lodged.* Corn in the blade be beaten flat.
57. *Nature's germins tumble.* Though the precious seeds of all life be destroyed.
58. *Sicken, i.e.* of its own work.

First Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?
Macb. Call 'em, let me see 'em.
First Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow; grease that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet throw
Into the flame.
All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition: an armed Head.

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,—
First Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou nought.
First App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough.
[*Descends.*
Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution thanks;
Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one word more,—
First Witch. He will not be commanded; here's another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. Second Apparition: a bloody Child.

Sec. App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!
Macb. Had I three ears, I'ld hear thee.
Sec. App. Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born

63. *Nine farrow.* Litter of nine. 72. *Harp'd.* Hit on.

Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*

Macb. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. Third Apparition: a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand.

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

All. Listen, but speak not to 't.

Third App. Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macb. That will never be:
Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bodements! good!
Rebellion's head, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time and mortal custom. Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing: tell me, if your art
Can tell so much: shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

82. *Take a bond of fate.* And pledge fate to my cause.
91. *Dunsinane.* Pronounce *Dunsínane*; elsewhere *Dunsináne.*
93. *Impress.* Force into his service.

All. Seek to know no more.
Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise is this?
[*Hautboys.*
First Witch. Show!
Sec. Witch. Show!
Third Witch. Show!
All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart!

A show of eight Kings, the last with a glass in his hand: Banquo's Ghost following.

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo: down!
Thy crown does sear mine eye-balls. And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first.
A third is like the former. Filthy hags!
Why do you show me this? A fourth! Start, eyes!
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?
Another yet! A seventh! I'll see no more:
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see
That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry:
Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true;
For the blood-bolter'd Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so?

119. *Two-fold balls.* Globes, part of the royal insignia—"two-fold" because James was crowned both at Scone and at Westminster, thus uniting the kingdoms of England and Scotland. As the king of England had been, since 1542, titular king of Ireland, James could carry a "treble sceptre."
121. *Blood-bolter'd.* His hair matted with clotted blood.

First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so: but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites,
And show the best of our delights:
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round,
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish, with Hecate.*

Macb. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour
Stand aye accursed in the calendar!
Come in, without there!

Enter Lennox.

Len. What's your grace's will?
Macb. Saw you the weird sisters?
Len. No, my lord.
Macb. Came they not by you?
Len. No indeed, my lord.
Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
The galloping of horse: who was 't came by?
Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.
Macb. Fled to England!
Len. Ay, my good lord.
Macb. [*Aside.*] Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits:
The flighty purpose never is o'ertook

142. *Anticipatest.* Preventest. 143. *Flighty.* Fleeting.

Unless the deed go with it: from this moment
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done:
The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool:
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II

Fife. Macduff's castle

Enter Lady Macduff, her Son, and Ross.

L. Macd. What had he done, to make him fly the land?
Ross. You must have patience, madam.
L. Macd. He had none:
His flight was madness: when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.
Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.
L. Macd. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.

All is the fear and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself: but, for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o' the season. I dare not speak much further:
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

L. Macd. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort:
I take my leave at once. [*Exit.*

L. Macd. Sirrah, your father's dead:
And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

L. Macd. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

L. Macd. Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor lime,

17. *Fits o' the season.* The sudden disorders and dangers of the times.

19–22. *When we hold . . . move.* When vague fears, the grounds of which we cannot define, and which, as it were, toss us hither and thither on a sea of uncertainty, make us inclined to believe rumours.

The pitfall nor the gin.

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. Macd. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

L. Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

L. Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

L. Macd. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

L. Macd. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors that do so?

L. Macd. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged that swear and lie?

L. Macd. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

L. Macd. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men and hang up them.

L. Macd. Now, God help thee, poor monkey!
But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'ld weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

L. Macd. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am perfect.
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a homely man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks I am too savage;
To do worse to you were fell cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit.*

L. Macd. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world, where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?—What are these faces?

Enter Murderers.

First Mur. Where is your husband?

L. Macd. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

First Mur. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou liest, thou shag-ear'd villain!

First Mur. What, you egg! [*Stabbing him.*
Young fry of treachery!

65. *Though . . . I am perfect.* Though I am perfectly acquainted with your high rank.
70. *To do worse.* By not warning you.

Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [*Dies.*

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying "Murderer!"*
Exeunt murderers, following her.

Scene III

England. Before the King's palace

Enter Malcolm and Macduff.

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.
Macd. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom: each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.
Mal. What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me; and wisdom

8. *Like syllable of dolour.* A similar cry of grief.
15. *Through me, i.e.* by betraying me.
Wisdom. [It is] wisdom.

To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.
Macd. I am not treacherous.
Mal. But Macbeth is,
A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge. But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose:
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so.
Macd. I have lost my hopes.
Mal. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties. You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.
Macd. Bleed, bleed, poor country:
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy wrongs;
The title is affeer'd. Fare thee well, lord:
I would not be the villain that thou think'st

19–20. *Recoil . . . charge.* Turn aside from the path of virtue in carrying out a royal command.

24. *My hopes.* Hopes that Malcolm would lead an army into Scotland.

26. *In that rawness.* In such haste.

29–30. *Let not . . . safeties.* Do not think that my suspicions necessarily impute to you dishonourable motives: they arise out of my cautiousness.

34. *Affeer'd.* Established.

For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp
And the rich East to boot.

Mal. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think withal
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here from gracious England have I offer
Of goodly thousands: but for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macd. What should he be?

Mal. It is myself I mean: in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

Macd. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: and my desire

52. *Be open'd.* Come into flower.
55. *Confineless.* Unbounded.

All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.
Macd. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.
Mal. With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such
A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more, that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.
Macd. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will
Of your mere own: all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

62. *Continent.* Restraining.
69. *Convey.* Secretly indulge.
72. *Affection.* Nature.
81. *Summer-seeming.* Short-lived like summer.
83. *Foisons.* Abundance.
84. *Of your mere own, i.e.* without taking other people's.
Portable. Bearable.

Mal. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.
Macd. O Scotland, Scotland!
Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken
Macd. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable!
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!
Mal. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts

90. *Relish.* Touch, or flavour.
91. *The division of.* All the different forms of.
106. *Died every day, i.e.* to the vanities of the world.

To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to love, I never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
Was this upon myself: what I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command:
Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we'll together, and the chance of goodness
Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well, more anon. Comes the king forth, I pray you?

Doct. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls

113. *Trains.* Artifices.
130. *At a point.* Fully equipped.
131–32. *The chance . . . quarrel.* May virtue fare well in proportion as our cause is just.

That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

Mal. I thank you, doctor. [*Exit Doctor.*

Macd. What's the disease he means?

Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil:
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since my here-remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely-visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Ross.

Macd. See, who comes here?

Mal. My countryman; but yet I know him not.

Macd. My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

137. *Stay.* Wait for.

137–38. *Convinces . . . of art.* Baffles (*convinces*) all the attempts (*assay*) of medical skill.

141. *The evil.* The "King's evil," or scrofula, because curable only (so it was believed) by the touch of an anointed king.

142. *This good king.* Edward the Confessor.

148. *Golden stamp.* A coin.

151. *Strange virtue.* Healing power.

Mal. I know him now: good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!
Ross. Sir, amen.
Macd. Stands Scotland where it did?
Ross. Alas, poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or ere they sicken.
Macd. O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!
Mal. What's the newest grief?
Ross. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.
Macd. How does my wife?
Ross. Why, well.
Macd. And all my children?
Ross. Well too.
Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?
Ross. No; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.
Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech: how goes 't?
Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,

165. *Modern ecstasy.* An ordinary disturbance of the mind.
169. *Nice.* Precisely detailed.
170. *Hiss the speaker.* Cause the speaker to be hissed, *i.e.* for telling news already out of date.

Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff their dire distresses.

Mal. Be 't their comfort
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men;
An older and a better soldier none
That Christendom gives out.

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

Macd. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief
Due to some single breast?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe, though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

Macd. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macd. Hum! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,

178. *Were out.* In arms. 187. *Gives out.* Has to show.
190. *Latch.* Catch. 191. *Fee-grief.* Private grief.

Were, on the quarry of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.
Mal. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
Macd. My children too?
Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.
Macd. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?
Ross. I have said.
Mal. Be comforted:
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.
Macd. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?
Mal. Dispute it like a man.
Macd. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls: heaven rest them now!

201. *On the quarry.* On the heap made by the slain bodies.
211. *He.* More probably Malcolm than Macbeth.
215. *Dispute it.* Fight against it.

Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.
Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all intermission; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!
Mal. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave. Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments. Receive what cheer you may;
The night is long that never finds the day.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT FIFTH

Scene I

Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle

Enter a Doctor of Physic and a Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doct. I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?
Gent. Since his majesty went into the field, I have

227. *Intermission.* Delay.
232. *Our lack . . . leave.* Nothing remains to be done but to take our leave.
234. *Put on their instruments.* Set to work their ministers [of vengeance].

seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep and do the effects of watching! In this slumbery agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

Gent. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may to me, and 'tis most meet you should.

Gent. Neither to you nor to any one, having no witness to confirm my speech.

Enter Lady Macbeth, with a taper.

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise, and, upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand close.

Doct. How came she by that light?

Gent. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem

5. *Nightgown.* Dressing-gown.
11. *The effects of watching.* The actions of one who is awake.
20. *Guise.* Custom.
22. *Close.* Hidden.

thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damned spot! out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this starting.

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. Pray God it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands; put on your night-gown; look not so pale: I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on 's grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gent. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. So good night:
My mind she has mated and amazed my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

Gent. Good night, good doctor.

[*Exeunt.*

82. *Means . . . annoyance.* All means of injuring herself.
84. *Mated.* Bewildered.

Scene II

The country near Dunsinane

Drum and colours. Enter Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox and Soldiers.

Ment. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:
Revenges burn in them; for their dear causes
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.

Ang. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

Caith. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

Len. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many unrough youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Ment. What does the tyrant?

Caith. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.

Ang. Now does he feel
His secret murders sticking on his hands;

3–5. *Their dear causes . . . mortified man.* The causes which touch them so closely (*dear*) would impel even a man in whom all feeling was deadened to answer the grim summons to war and bloodshed.

8. *File.* List.

15–16. *Buckle his . . . rule.* Keep in hand his disorganised followers.

Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

Ment. Who then shall blame
His pester'd senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?

Caith. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
Each drop of us.

Len. Or so much as it needs
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

Scene III

Dunsinane. A room in the castle

Enter Macbeth, Doctor, and Attendants.

Macb. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?

18. *Minutely.* Every moment.
23. *To recoil and start.* For recoiling and starting.
27. *Medicine, i.e.* Malcolm, also called "the sovereign flower" in line 30.
28. *In our country's purge.* To purge our country [of Macbeth].
1. *Them.* The false thanes referred to below in line 7.
3. *Taint.* Be infected with.

Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant.

My curse upon thee light, thou cream-faced loon!
Where got'st thou that goose look?

Serv. There is ten thousand—

Macb. Geese, villain?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

Macb. Go prick thy face and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, whey-face?

Serv. The English force, so please you.

Macb. Take thy face hence. [*Exit Servant.*
Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf,
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,

15. *Lily-liver'd.* Cowardly. *Patch.* Fool.

Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter Seyton.

Sey. What's your gracious pleasure?
Macb. What news more?
Sey. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.
Macb. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.
Sey. 'Tis not needed yet.
Macb. I'll put it on.
Send out moe horses, skirr the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?
Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.
Macb. Cure her of that.
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff.
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land, find her disease

50. *Cast.* Examine medically.
51. *Her disease.* Scotland's.

And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again. Pull 't off, I say.
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

Doct. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

Macb. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

Doct. [*Aside.*] Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV

Country near Birnam wood

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, old Siward and his Son, Macduff, Menteith, Caithness, Angus, Lennox, Ross, and Soldiers, marching.

Mal. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

Ment. We doubt it nothing.

Siw. What wood is this before us?

Ment. The wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough,
And bear 't before him: thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

54. *Pull 't off*, *i.e.* his armour.
58. *Bring it*, *i.e.* his armour.
59. *Bane.* Destruction.

Soldiers. It shall be done.
Siw. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before 't.
Mal. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both more and less have given him the revolt,
And none serve with him but constrained things
Whose hearts are absent too.
Macd. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.
Siw. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have and what we owe
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate,
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate:
Towards which advance the war.

[*Exeunt, marching.*

11. *Advantage to be given.* An opportunity open to them.
12. *More and less.* High and low in rank.
14–15. *Let our . . . event.* In order that our judgments may be just, let us wait for the final issue of events, which will show us how things really are.
18. *We have . . . we owe.* Have gained and lost.
19–20. *Thoughts . . . must arbitrate.* Conjectures deal with things hoped for but uncertain. Only blows can determine the actual result.

Scene V

Dunsinane. Within the castle

Enter Macbeth, Seyton, and Soldiers, with drum and colours.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still "They come": our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not forced with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.
[*A cry of women within.*
What is that noise?
Sey. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*
Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in 't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Re-enter Seyton.

Wherefore was that cry?
Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.
Macb. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.

5. *Forced.* Re-inforced.
11. *My fell of hair.* Head of hair.
17. *Such a word* [as "death"].

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

Mess. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

Macb. Well, say, sir.

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave!

Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if 't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend

39. *Cling.* Shrivel.
41. *Pull in resolution.* Check, or rein in, my confidence.

That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane"; and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he avouches does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack! 50
At least we'll die with harness on our back. [*Exeunt.*

Scene VI

Dunsinane. Before the castle

Drum and colours. Enter Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff, and their Army, with boughs.

Mal. Now near enough; your leavy screens throw down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon 's what else remains to do,
According to our order.

Siw. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macd. Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death. 10
[*Exeunt.*

49. *The estate o' the world.* The frame of the universe.
4. *First battle.* Vanguard.

Scene VII

Another part of the field

Alarums. Enter Macbeth.

Macb. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But bear-like I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young Siward.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?
Macb. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.
Yo. Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.
Macb. My name's Macbeth.
Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.
Macb. No, nor more fearful.
Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.
[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*
Macb. Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter Macduff.

Macd. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.

2. *Fight the course.* The attack of dogs. In bear-baiting the bear was first tied to a stake, and then the dogs were loosed upon him.

I cannot strike at wretched kerns, whose arms
Are hired to bear their staves: either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited: let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter Malcolm and old Siward.

Siw. This way, my lord; the castle's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.
Mal. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.
Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarum.*

Scene VIII

Another part of the field

Enter Macbeth.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

22. *Bruited.* Announced.
24. *Gently rendered.* Surrendered without resistance.
29. *Beside us.* Deliberately so as to miss us.
1. *Play the Roman fool.* Commit suicide.
2. *Lives.* Living men.

Enter Macduff.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn!
Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.
Macd. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword, thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*
Macb. Thou losest labour:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.
Macd. Despair thy charm,
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripped.
Macb. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.
Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,

8. *Than terms . . . thee out.* Than words can express.
9. *Intrenchant.* Unwoundable.
14. *The angel.* The *evil* angel.
18. *My better part of man.* My very soul.
20. *Palter.* Quibble.

Painted upon a pole; and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."
Macb. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And curs'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"
[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, Malcolm, old Siward, Ross, the other Thanes, and Soldiers.

Mal. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.
Siw. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
Ross. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt:
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siw. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow

26. *Painted upon a pole, i.e.* probably on cloth hung from a pole.
29. *Baited.* Barked at.
32. *The last.* A last effort.
36. *Go off.* Be killed.
42. *The unshrinking . . . fought.* The place where he fought without shrinking.

Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siw. Had he his hurts before?

Ross. Ay, on the front.

Siw. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Siw. He's worth no more:
They say he parted well and paid his score:
And so God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter Macduff, with Macbeth's head.

Macd. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

All. Hail, King of Scotland!

[*Flourish.*

Mal. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland

52. *Parted.* Died.
55. *The time is free.* Freedom is restored to the times.
56. *Thy kingdom's pearl.* The choicest of thy subjects.

In such an honour named. What's more to do,
Which would be planted newly with the time,
As calling home our exiled friends abroad
That fled the snares of watchful tyranny,
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace
We will perform in measure, time and place:
So thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Act I. Scenes i.–iv.

1. For what reasons is the play made to open with a thunderstorm and witches?

2. Why is the king at Forres instead of leading his troops in the battle? Why is Malcolm with him?

3. Have the sergeant and Ross come from the same place? Whom do both of them specially mention in their reports? What do they say about him? What leads you to think that he will shortly appear?

4. Are the witches in Sc. iii. in the same place as in Sc. i.? (*See* Sc. i. l. 6). How would it affect the play if Sc. i. had been omitted altogether?

5. What have the witches been doing, and what do they threaten to do? Would *you* like them to have to do with you? Are you interested to know why they are to meet Macbeth?

6. Describe carefully the interview between the witches and Macbeth and Banquo. In what different ways do the two men appear to be affected by the prophecies? Why does Macbeth start with fear? Do you think that, before the witch's promise, he had thought of being king? Account for the behaviour of Banquo.

7. What effect has the fulfilment of one of the prophecies on Macbeth? on Banquo? on *you*?

8. Why does Duncan, after thanking Macbeth in Sc. iv., suddenly change the subject and proclaim Malcolm "the Prince of Cumberland" (*i.e.* heir to the throne)?

Was it customary in Scotland for a king to be succeeded by his son? What effect has the incident on Macbeth?

9. Explain: (*a*) *Hurlyburly, kernes, gallowglasses;* (*b*) *Fair is foul and foul is fair;* (*c*) *memorise another Golgotha;* (*d*) *the insane root;* (*e*) *Time and the hour run through the roughest day.*

10. Give examples from these scenes of: (*a*) Expressions borrowed from the stage; (*b*) adjectives used as nouns; (*c*) double comparative; (*d*) omission of the relative pronoun.

Act I. Scenes v.–vii.

1. Is the whole of Macbeth's letter given? Why has he had inquiries made about the powers of the witches?

2. Does Lady Macbeth guess that Macbeth has already thought of violently seizing Duncan's crown? Does *she* think of it? After Macbeth's arrival who first puts the thought into words?

3. Against what does Lady Macbeth warn her husband near the end of Sc. v.? Why is he not present to welcome Duncan on the latter's arrival at the castle (Sc. vi.)? Does Duncan notice his absence?

4. Re-write in your own words, so as to show that you understand it, Macbeth's soliloquy in Sc. vii.

5. What are your impressions of the character of Duncan? How would you feel towards Macbeth, had Duncan been a wicked king?

6. Throughout the Act does Lady Macbeth ever show that she is seeking her own advancement?

7. What differences in character do you observe in Act I. between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?

8. Which do you consider the most terrible speech in the Act? Make a list of the words in Sc. v. ll. 40–55

which you associate with grimness and gloom. Make a similar list from Sc. vi. ll. 1–9 of words which have sweet and pleasant associations.

Act II

1. To what do you suppose the word "that" (Sc. i. l. 5) refers?

2. What "cursed thoughts" does Banquo refer to in l. 8? (*Cf.* l. 20.) Do you think he fears that Macbeth may do violence to Duncan?

3. What conclusion does Macbeth come to about the dagger? Why should he be subject to such hallucination?

4. Do we *see* the murder of Duncan? Which would be the more terrible for us—actually to see it, or to imagine it? On which of the stages (*see* Introduction) would (*a*) Lady Macbeth be waiting, (*b*) the murder be taking place?

5. Why does Macbeth cry out (Sc. ii. l. 9)?

6. Write an account of the conversation between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth on his entry after the murder.

7. Does Macbeth ever answer his wife's question in l. 17? Do you find his speeches at all disconnected? Account for his behaviour in both instances.

8. Examine all of Lady Macbeth's speeches from the entry of her husband up to the first knocking at the door. Does she gradually gain in self-possession and firmness? If so, why has it been necessary for her to make the effort for such self-control?

9. What is the effect of the knocking at the door on Macbeth? on Lady Macbeth? on *you*?

10. Why does Shakespeare introduce the Porter-scene? (*See* ll. 66–71 of Sc. ii.). Is Macbeth in a frame of mind fitted to receive a visitor? Is the Porter episode different in tone from the preceding scene?

11. When Macbeth meets the visitors, why are his speeches so short? Why has Shakespeare made Lennox's speech (Sc. iii. l. 40) rather lengthy?

12. Does Macbeth act well when the murder is discovered?

13. In what order do the characters enter after the ringing of the alarum bell? From this, what may be inferred as to what each has been doing just previously?

14. Does Lady Macbeth act well at her entry?

15. What do you think of Macbeth's excuse for having murdered the grooms? Is it not a long answer to Macduff's pointed question?

16. Does Lady Macbeth really faint or pretend to do so? Give reasons for your opinion. If a lady faints in the presence of gentlemen, is it usual to leave servants to attend to her? Does either Macduff or Banquo go to her help? Do *they* believe the swoon genuine?

17. How many of the characters in the scene, do you think, may suspect that Macbeth was concerned in Duncan's murder?

18. Collect from Scenes iii. and iv. all the supernatural or unusual happenings which have accompanied the murder of Duncan.

19. What use does Macbeth appear to have made of the flight of the princes?

20. Why does Macduff not go to Scone?

21. Comment on any peculiarity of grammatical construction in the following:

(*a*) Listening their fear.
(*b*) The handle toward my hand.
(*c*) They address'd them again to sleep.
(*d*) There's one did laugh in 's sleep.
(*e*) The near in blood, the nearer bloody.
(*f*) Renown and grace is dead.

22. Explain the allusions in the following:

(*a*) Pale Hecate's offerings.
(*b*) With Tarquin's ravishing strides.
(*c*) Great Neptune's ocean.
(*d*) A new Gorgon.

23. Quote from Act II. instances of plays upon words.

Act III. Scenes i.–iv.

1. How have the relations of Banquo and Macbeth changed since the beginning of the play? Quote any passage which shows that now Banquo definitely suspects Macbeth of being Duncan's murderer. Does Macbeth distrust Banquo? Why?

2. How would Macbeth benefit by Banquo's death? Why does the former seek information about the proposed ride of the latter and his son, Fleance? How does Macbeth gain this without arousing Banquo's suspicions?

3. Is the reason given by Macbeth for dismissing his courtiers the real reason?

4. Write an account of his interview with the murderers.

5. Is there any resemblance between Lady Macbeth's speech beginning at Sc. ii. l. 4, and that of Macbeth which immediately follows?

6. Is any change in Macbeth's character now noticeable? Does he tell his wife of his plot against Banquo? Do you think she suspects anything? Why should she inquire about Banquo in the first line of the scene?

7. Why does Shakespeare have the light of the torch struck out at the murder of Banquo? [Compare with the fact that we did not *see* the murder of Duncan.]

8. Examine minutely the conversation and behaviour of the third murderer in Sc. iii., and of Macbeth in Sc. iv. then say whether or not the third murderer was Macbeth himself. Give reasons for your opinion.

9. What does Macbeth pretend to wish at both times when the ghost enters?

10. Collect all the passages which seem to show that Banquo's ghost was visible only to Macbeth. Did Shakespeare intend the *audience* to see the ghost? Why was Banquo's *head* gashed, and not, for instance, his breast? Is there a sufficient clue in the dialogue to tell the audience that it was *Banquo's* ghost?

11. Compare Macbeth's behaviour after the first entry of the ghost with his behaviour after its second entry. What conclusion does he come to about the ghost (Sc. iv. ll. 106–7)? Compare the second *exit* of the ghost with the vanishing of the phantom dagger. Why do both ghost and dagger disappear?

12. How does Lady Macbeth behave under the trying circumstances? Of what is she afraid? What question of Ross brings this fear to a crisis? Did Ross ask it with any intention?

13. Examine Lady Macbeth's speeches addressed to her husband between the first appearance of the ghost and her dismissal of the guests. Compare them with those she makes to him when the guests have gone. Account for the difference.

14. Write a careful description of the whole of the Banquet Scene.

15. Now that Banquo is disposed of, to which of his nobles does Macbeth next turn his thoughts? What is in Macbeth's mind when he refers to him in Sc. iv. l. 128?

16. What have you noticed in regard to the use of rhyming couplets in the play? Give examples.

17. By whom and on what occasions were the following passages spoken? Explain their meaning.

(*a*) Are you so gospell'd
To pray for this good man?

(*b*) 'Tis better thee without than he within.

(*c*) Augures and understood relations have
By maggot-pies and choughs and rooks brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.

Act III. Scenes v. and vi.

1. Is the metre of Sc. v. the same as that of most of the play? Compare the metre with that used in the witches' other speeches.

2. What is the relationship between Hecate and the witches? When are they to see Macbeth? What then is one of the purposes of Sc. vi.?

3. In what manner does Lennox speak ll. 1–24? Give the substance of his remarks. Is the "lord" equally bold in his speech? Have the nobles talked so openly against Macbeth before in the play? What change does this show as regards public feeling in Scotland?

4. From the references to Macduff in this scene, whence are we led to expect that deliverence will come?

Act IV. Scenes i. and ii.

1. Why are the loathsome ingredients of the witches' cauldron mentioned in detail?

2. Write a careful description of all that Macbeth sees and hears in the witches' cavern?

3. Which of his nobles does Macbeth fear most? About whom, do you think, is he going to ask when the witch interrupts him (l. 67)? Since the apparition of the armed head "knows Macbeth's thought" and warns him against Macduff, for what may the apparition stand?

4. Do the words of the second and third apparitions produce on Macbeth the effect which the witches planned

to produce (Act III. Sc. v. ll. 23–33)? Why is he still determined to kill Macduff?

5. What promise does the second apparition give Macbeth?

6. Who is the only "issue of a king," likely to be crowned, whom we have not so far in the play? For whom may the third apparition stand?

7. By what means only could Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane Hill? Is this means suggested by the fact that the third apparition has a tree in its hand?

Note.—When you have read to the end of the play, you will know if your surmises, as to what the apparitions mean, are correct.

8. Whom does the eighth king in the procession represent? Explain the references in "two-fold balls and treble sceptres."

9. Is Banquo's ghost the same or not as that which Macbeth saw at the banquet? Give reasons for your answer.

10. What effect has Lennox's information on Macbeth? Has the latter any motive in deciding to slay Macduff's wife and family? Is there any change in his character since the murder of Banquo?

11. Was Macduff's conduct in leaving his wife and children justifiable?

12. Give an account of the conversation between Lady Macduff and her son, and of the latter's death. What effect has the whole scene upon you? Is the murder made to appear more terrible by its following immediately upon the boy's witty prattle?

13. How do you feel now towards Macbeth? If he could be removed, whom would you like to see succeed him on the throne?

14. With what meaning and in what connection does

each of the following words occur: *Brinded, ravin'd, sliver'd, slab, chaudron, harp'd, germens, impress, blood-boltered, shag-haired?*

Act IV. Sc. III.

1. What is Macduff's purpose in seeking Malcolm? Of what does Malcolm suspect him, and on what grounds?

2. How and for what purpose does Malcolm defame himself?

3. How does Macduff prove the genuineness of his motives?

4. What effect is produced by the sudden contrast between Malcolm's false and true descriptions of himself? Would his good qualities have impressed us so much, if they had not been immediately preceded by a list of such bad ones?

5. Review the appearances of Malcolm in the play (I. ii., I. iv., II. iii.). Has he changed at all in character? If so, to what experiences do you attribute the change? Does he now seem more fitted to be a king?

6. Who is the king referred to in l. 135? Why is this conversation with the doctor introduced? May there be a compliment to King James in it?

7. What double purpose does the coming of Ross serve? Does he help to keep the condition of Scotland before our minds?

8. Describe the effect that the news of the murder of his wife and family has upon Macduff. Why should Ross be the bearer of the tidings?

9. Has Macduff now a double motive for seeking vengeance on Macbeth? Does Malcolm recognise this? Whom do you expect now to take a prominent part in the invasion of Scotland to bring about Macbeth's downfall?

10. Does the word "he" (l. 211) refer to Malcolm or to Macbeth? Give reasons for your answer.

11. Comment on anything unusual in the grammar or language of the following:

(*a*) To top Macbeth.
(*b*) They were all struck for thee.
(*c*) Nothing, but who knows nothing.
(*d*) The dead man's knell is there scarce ask'd for who.

Act V. Scenes I.–III.

1. Whither has Macbeth removed from the palace of Forres? Why has he come here? On what is he relying for his personal safety?

2. How long is it since we last saw Lady Macbeth? Has Macbeth relied on her aid at all during the latter half of the play? Why not? What has happened to her in the interval?

3. Write a full description of the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth, mentioning the incidents to which she refers during the scene. To what is her suffering evidently due?

4. By bringing Macbeth to Dunsinane (*see* map) has Shakespeare reduced the time it will take for Malcolm, Macduff, and the English to reach Macbeth? By what means does Shakespeare bridge over the necessary interval?

5. As Macbeth has shut himself *within* Dunsinane, and the thanes in revolt are *without*, how many narratives must Shakespeare keep going? How does he do it? [Examine the stage directions of the first six scenes in Act V.]

6. What has evidently happened in Scotland? Do *you* attribute Macbeth's conduct to either "madness" or

" valiant fury " (Sc. ii. ll. 13, 14)? In what different ways does the memory of their crimes affect Macbeth and his wife?

7. When did you last see Macbeth in person? Do you feel as if much had happened since then? Has the interval seemed considerable?

8. Judging from his manner in Sc. iii., would you say Macbeth had changed much? What states of mind does he show in Sc. iii. ll. 22–28, and in his several instructions about his armour?

9. Is there any need for us to *see* Lady Macbeth again? Should we be satisfied if we did not know what happened to her? From the doctor's remark (Sc. iii. ll. 37–39) do you gather that she is in any immediate danger of dying?

10. Connect the following passages with their contexts, stating by whom and under what circumstances they were used, and adding any necessary explanations:

(*a*) This disease is beyond my practice.
(*b*) Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal.
(*c*) Mingle with the English epicures.

Act V. Scenes iv.–viii.

1. What does the stage-direction at the head of Sc. iv. show has happened?

2. Describe the incident of the bough-cutting. What promise of the witches must cease to be a source of confidence to Macbeth when he learns of the incident?

3. Recalling the recent pronouncement of the doctor, are you surprised to hear of Lady Macbeth's death? Is it likely that her women would have shrieked if she had died an ordinary death? Do you think it was a case of suicide?

4. Describe and account for the way in which Macbeth

receives the news of her death, and quote his reflections on the vanity of human life.

5. Describe the scene in which news of the moving wood is brought to Macbeth at Dunsinane. Can you find anything to admire in Macbeth at this point?

6. Has Macbeth still any confidence in the witches? If he has, does the death of young Siward strengthen it? At what point in Sc. viii. does his false confidence definitely leave him?

7. Describe his meeting with Macduff and the result.

8. How does Siward express himself on hearing of his son's death?

9. Do Malcolm's words (Sc. viii. ll. 69–71) confirm any theory you have formed?

10. Write out the scansion of the following lines:

(*a*) Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury.
(*b*) To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow.
(*c*) To the last syllable of recorded time.
(*d*) The queen, my lord, is dead. She should have died hereafter.
(*e*) The numbers of our host, and make discovery.

11. Quote references in these scenes to (*a*) the stage, (*b*) bear-baiting.

Now that we have read the play and are familiar with the story which it has to tell, we may pass to the study of some matters which may interest us more deeply in the story itself, and in how it was composed. For this purpose it will be convenient, after first getting a clear idea of the "motive" of the play, to select, among other things, three of the chief elements which go to the making of any good story, namely:

(1) the plot,
(2) the characters,
(3) the settings,

and to consider each of these in turn.

I.—THE MOTIVE OF THE PLAY

The word "motive" may be used in two senses: first, with its usual meaning of "that which causes or induces action"; and second, in its more limited, literary sense—the sense in which it is used in the heading—when it means the central idea or chief subject of a literary work. There is no reason why we should not consider the play from both these points of view, and ask (1) what led Shakespeare to write *Macbeth*, and (2) what is the underlying idea of the play.

(1) The answer to the first question is not difficult to find: it was Shakespeare's business to write plays,

and there is abundant reason to suppose that he was a shrewd and capable business man as well as a dramatic artist. He knew the value of royal patronage, and that the success of a play would be well assured if he could secure for it the interest of King James I. and his court. Accordingly, bearing in mind that James had come from Scotland, he based his play on the history of that country, and introduced Banquo and Fleance, the reputed ancestors of the Stuart King according to the legends of the time. He referred in the play (IV. i. 119) to the union of England and Scotland, brought about by the accession of James to the English throne; and, knowing that the king was deeply interested in the study of witchcraft and had actually written a book on the subject, he introduced the witch-scenes which play such an important part in the story. By such indirect compliments he hoped to attract James's attention and to arouse his interest in the play.

(2) The underlying idea, or "motive" in a literary sense, of *Macbeth* may be summed up in the single word "ambition." The whole composition may be regarded, from one point of view, as a study in the influences of ambition on human characters of different types: on Macbeth, a man of strong imagination and weak will; on Lady Macbeth, a woman of little imagination and strong will; and on Banquo, a character pure in motive and open of heart. We are shown dramatically how far and in what directions ambition, guilty and unrestrained in the first two instances, innocent in the last case, impels the characters in whom we see it working. Banquo it leaves unscathed—for his death was not the result of his ambition. Macbeth and

his wife, on the other hand, are driven by it to moral and physical disaster. With them it was a joint ambition: they aimed at power and position, at the crown which would give them these, and they seem to have thought of little else. Without doubt their ambition was of long standing and had become part of their very natures, for long before the events at the opening of the play they must have weighed their chances of securing that position to which their rights to the throne in a measure entitled them. Then, stimulated by Macbeth's military successes, and tempted by opportunity, they allow their ambition to possess them utterly, brush everything else aside to attain it, and, having done so, rush, as a consequence, headlong to ruin. Macbeth had no spur

> but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
> And falls on the other.

II.—THE PLOT

LITERARY "plot" may be described as the pattern or design of the story. Just as an artist must first choose the objects which he wishes to have in his picture, and then arrange them in the fashion which he thinks most artistically effective, so the literary artist must first select his materials and then shape them into his story. The materials of the story are incidents and characters which may be met with in human life, and the design into which these are fitted is the plot. It does not greatly matter whether the incidents and

characters chosen are actual or only imagined. The picture of a landscape is certainly not less, and may be more, beautiful because the artist has brought together in it some trees, perhaps, a bridge, a stream, and a heathery bank, which in actual fact do not exist together, if indeed they exist at all outside of the artist's imagination. The important thing is that they should *appear* to be true to nature. It very often happens that in nature such objects are grouped together in a manner which delights the heart of the artist who merely reproduces them without altering their arrangement. Very rarely, however, is this the case with human life. A chain of incidents may accidentally occur, which without any re-arrangement would form the pattern or plot of a story; but this very seldom happens, and usually large parts of our lives are so commonplace and uninteresting that the story-writer finds it necessary to take one incident here and another there, and to omit most of what happens in between. If, perhaps, by slightly altering or re-shaping the incidents, he can arrange them in such a way that they are ultimately brought to bear one on another, he has gone a long way towards having a well-formed plot. And this is exactly what Shakespeare has done in making the plot of *Macbeth*. He has gone for his materials to different sources, which we now know to be inaccurate in themselves; has increased this inaccuracy by deliberately bringing together from different parts of these source-books events or characters which have no actual connection with one another; has sometimes altered them to suit his own purpose; and yet has created, from them and

the things they suggested, a great and terrible story, true and lasting, because rooted deeply in the eternal verities of human life.

Those who may wish to know the actual facts about Macbeth so far as they are known to authentic history may satisfy their curiosity in a later section of this Commentary. At this point it seems more interesting to see how Shakespeare works at this twofold process of selection and arrangement, to see—at least in a general way—what materials he selects, where he finds them, and how he alters them to fit into his plot.

(*a*) The Sources of the Plot

When, in order to gain the patronage and interest of King James VI., Shakespeare decided, as we have seen, to write a play dealing with Scotland, he would naturally seek for suitable materials in books dealing with the history of that country; and at that time the two most important books on the subject were Buchanan's *History of Scotland*, published in 1582, and Holinshed's *Chronicle of England and Scotland*, of which a second edition had appeared in 1587. Of these Shakespeare may have consulted the former and certainly did use the latter as a source whence to derive a good deal of material for the play. He seems to have consulted with great care Holinshed's accounts of King Duncan, King Duff, King Macbeth, and possibly of King Kenneth in the *Chronicle of Scotland*; while in the *Chronicle of England* he found material in the records of King Edward the Confessor. As he turned

over the pages of the *Chronicle* dealing with the reign of Duncan, he would read that on the rebellion of Macdonwald in Lochaber, Duncan held a council at which he appointed Banquo and Macbeth as his generals; that their campaign against Macdonwald resulted in the suicide of the latter within his own castle; and that immediately afterwards the same generals on two separate occasions gave battle to the Norse invaders in Fife. Most of the Norsemen were slain, and those that remained paid a "great somme of gold" to Macbeth for permission to bury their dead comrades in St. Colme's Inch in the Firth of Forth.

Shortly afterwards, "*it fortuned,*" so the *Chronicle* proceeds, "*as Makbeth and Banquho iournied towards Fores, where the king then laie, they went sporting by the waie together without other companie, save onelie themselves, passing through the woods and fields, when suddenlie in the middest of a launde, there met them three women in strange and wild apparell, resembling creatures of elder world, whome when they attentivelie beheld, woondering much at the sight, the first of them spake and said: 'All haile Makbeth thane of Glammis'* (*for he had lately entered into that dignitie and office by the death of his father Sinell*). *The second of them said: 'Haile Makbeth thane of Cawder.' But the third said: 'All haile Makbeth that heereafter shalt be king of Scotland.'*

"*Then Banquho: 'What manner of women* (*saith he*) *are you, that seeme so little favorable unto me, whereas to my fellow heere, besides high offices, you assigne also the kingdome, appointing foorth nothing for me at all?' 'Yes'* (*saith the first of them*) *'we promise greater*

benefits unto thee, than unto him, for he shall reigne in deed but with an unluckie end: neither shall he leave anie issue behind him to succeed in his place, when contrarilie thou in deed shalt not reigne at all, but of thee those shall be borne which shall governe the Scotish kingdome by long order of continuall descent.' Herewith the foresaid women vanished immediatlie out of their sight.

* * * * * *

" Shortlie after, the thane of Cawder being condemned at Fores of treason against the king committed; his lands, liveings, and offices were given of the kings liberalitie to Mackbeth.

" The same night after, at supper, Banquho iested with him and said: ' Now Mackbeth thou hast obteined those things which the two former sisters prophesied, there remaineth onelie for thee to purchase that which the third said should come to passe.' Whereupon Mackbeth revolving the thing in his mind, began even then to devise how he might atteine to the kingdome: but yet he thought with himselfe that he must tarie a time, which should advance him thereto (by the divine providence) as it had come to passe in his former preferment."

The appointment of Malcolm by the king as Prince of Cumberland, and, therefore, his successor, *" sore troubled"* Macbeth, and *" he began to take counsell how he might usurp the kingdome by force.*

* * * * * *

" The words of the three weird sisters also (of whom before ye have heard) greatlie incouraged him hereunto,

but speciallie his wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing, as she that was verie ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene."

Ultimately "*he slue the king at Enuernes* (*or as some say at Botgosuane,*" and, as the king's sons had fled, was himself invested as king at Scone.

Now the death of the king in "the smith's bothy" suggests a romantic and dramatic incident, but as no details were given by Holinshed, it did not serve Shakespeare's purpose. Accordingly he sought further, and in an earlier portion of the *Chronicle* he found an account of the murder of King Duff by one of his subjects, Donald, in such dramatic circumstances as made it entirely suitable for the play. As the latter was purely a work of fiction, there was no reason why Shakespeare should not transfer some of the details of this account and adapt them to the killing of Duncan by Macbeth. And this he has evidently done, Donald and his wife being converted for the time being into Lord and Lady Macbeth, and King Duff into Duncan.

According to Holinshed, King Duff had executed some rebel kinsmen of Donald who had sued for their pardons and been denied. "*Whereupon the foresaid Donwald lamenting their case made earnest labour and sute to the king to have begged their pardon; but having a plain denial, he conceived such an inward malice towards the king* (*though he shewed it not outwardlie at the first*) *that the same continued still boiling in his stomach, and ceased not till through setting on of his wife and in revenge of such unthankefulnesse hee found meanes to murther the king within the foresaid castell*

of Fores where he used to sojourne. For the king being in that countrie was accustomed to lie most commonlie within the same castell, having a speciall trust in Donwald, as a man whom he never suspected.

* * * * * *

"It chanced that the king upon the daie before he purposed to depart foorth of the castell, was long in his oratorie at his praiers, and there continued till it was late in the night. At the last comming foorth, he called such afore him as had faithfullie served him in pursute and apprehension of the rebels, and giving them heartie thanks, he bestowed sundrie honorable gifts amongst them, of the which number Donwald was one, as he that had beene ever accounted a most faithfull servant to the king.

"At length, having talked with them a long time he got him into his privie chamber, onelie with two of his chamberlains, who having brought him to bed came foorth againe and then fell to banketting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared diverse delicate dishes and sundrie sorts of drinks for their reare supper or collation, wherat they sate up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads were no sooner got to the pillow but asleepe they were so fast, that a man might have remooved the chamber over them, sooner than to have awaked them out of their drunken sleepe.

"Then Donwald though he abhorred the act greatlie in heart, yet through instigation of his wife hee called foure of his servants unto him (whome he had made privie to his wicked intent before, and framed to his

purpose with large gifts) *and now declaring unto them, after what sort they should worke the feat, they gladlie obeied his instructions and speedilie going about the murther, they enter the chamber* (*in which the king laie*) *a little before cocks crow, where they secretlie cut his throte as he laie sleeping, without anie buskling at all: and immediatlie by a posterne gate they carried foorth the dead bodie into the fields, and throwing it upon an horsse there provided readie for that purpose they convey it unto a place about two miles distant from the castell, where they staied, and gat certeine labourers to helpe them to turne the course of a little river running through the fields there.*"

They buried the body in the river bed, after which the labourers were slain by the murderers, who escaped to the Orkneys.

There is not space to give any further extracts from the *Chronicle*, which goes on to tell how, the next morning, when the murder was discovered, Donwald himself slew the chamberlains, and how many strange things, such as perpetual darkness and violent storms, happened in Scotland about the time of the king's death. Shakespeare then appears to have turned again to the history of Macbeth, where he would find accounts of the murder of Banquo and the escape of Fleance, the flight of Macduff, the conversation between the latter and Malcolm, the murder of Lady Macduff and her son, the coming of the English, the moving of Birnam Wood, and, finally, the death of Macbeth at the hands of Macduff.

From what has been said, it might seem at first glance as if Shakespeare had taken over almost bodily

into his play the story as told by Holinshed, so close are the resemblances between the two in subject-matter and even—though to a much less extent—in language. In both, among other points of likeness, we have the prophecies of the witches to Macbeth and Banquo, the later delusive promises to Macbeth, Lady Macbeth inciting her husband to the murder, the flight of Malcolm and Donalbain, and all the events just mentioned in the last paragraph. But while it is apparent that Shakespeare has borrowed a good deal from Holinshed, we must not over-estimate his debt. We must remember that a play and a "history" are very different things, and Shakespeare's genius reveals itself in the marvellous way in which he has transformed the fragments of the *Chronicle* into such a powerful and closely-knit whole. Clear and direct as Holinshed's narrative is—at least in the passages with which we are concerned—its effect on us is very different from that of the play. In the history the characters are merely so many persons about whom we are told certain things; but in the play they become living people, we meet them face to face, watch their every action, see deeply into their minds and hearts, and know them through and through.

In order to effect this transformation, Shakespeare does not hesitate to make many important alterations in Holinshed's story, when by doing so he can re-shape either incidents or characters in such a way as to make them fit into his plot. It is an interesting and valuable exercise to note these departures from the *Chronicle* and to find out probably why they were made. In doing this we shall find it convenient to classify the

deviations as (1) changes in incident, (2) changes in character; and under these headings we now summarise some of the more important alterations, leaving the reader to make a more complete list for himself.

(1) *Changes in Incident*

(*a*) The rebellion of Macdonwald (Macdowald), and the two separate invasions of Scotland by the Norsemen, are described in Holinshed as three distinct events, but are combined by Shakespeare into one; not, as is sometimes said, to prevent them from unnecessarily extending the time occupied by the action of the play—for they are not acted, but merely described by the sergeant and Ross—but to emphasise Macbeth's soldierly qualities of untiring energy, strength, and valour.

(*b*) For a similar reason, *i.e.* to add lustre to Macbeth's deeds of arms, Macdonwald, who in the *Chronicle* commits suicide, is in the play slain by Macbeth.

(*c*) The most remarkable deviation from Holinshed is, as we have seen, the substitution of the circumstances attending the murder of King Duff, for the less tragic, brief mention of Duncan's death. And having made this change, Shakespeare makes further changes within it: (1) The murder is committed according to Holinshed by four servants, but in the play Duncan is murdered by Macbeth himself—a circumstance which greatly adds to the tragic horror of the situation, as the murderer is the host of his victim. The change intensifies the struggle between Macbeth's ambition and his conscience. (2) In the *Chronicle* the dead

body is secretly buried in the bed of a stream; but in Shakespeare it remains in the chamber. By this change and the incidents resulting from it, the contrasted characters of Macbeth and his wife are brought sharply into relief; while it provides for some intensely tragic situations, both in the interval between the crime and its discovery, and in the scene where the discovery is made.

(*d*) In Holinshed, Banquo and Fleance are attacked as they are *returning* from the banquet; in Shakespeare, as they are going to it. This provides a natural means of gathering most of the thanes together to witness Macbeth's guilty behaviour when, at the appearances of Banquo's ghost, he almost betrays himself openly. Before this, one or two may have suspected him: now, all do so, and we feel that Macbeth is doomed. The scene also exhibits Macbeth and his wife in a crisis, and intensifies our impressions of the chief qualities in their characters.

(*e*) In the *Chronicle* the three prophecies are made by the "weird sisters, the goddesses of destinie"; the warning against Macduff is given by "certeine wizzards"; and the two deceptive promises are made by a witch. In Shakespeare, these different agents are condensed into the three witches—an example of that dramatic economy to which attention will presently be directed (p. 152).

(2) *Changes in Character*

(1) Holinshed's DUNCAN is a young and weak king, so "gentle and soft of nature" that Macdowald calls

him "a faint-hearted milkesop." He was "negligent in punishing offenders," and unscrupulous, as he sought "to defraud him (Macbeth) of all maner and claim . . . unto the crowne." Shakespeare's Duncan gives us the impression that he is elderly, gentle, and gracious—too mild, indeed, to be an effective leader of men in those times. He is, nevertheless, a noble and kingly figure, virtuous and even saintly (IV. iii.), just and "clear in his great office."

The change has been made to deprive Macbeth of any just excuse for his crime, and to arouse our sympathy for Duncan. A tragedy is always the greater when the fate of the victim is undeserved.

(2) Holinshed's MACBETH, during the earlier and greater part of his reign, was a wise, liberal, and capable ruler, a maker of laws and a maintainer of justice. It was only in the later years of his reign that he became tyrannical and cruel. Shakespeare omits most of the good, and emphasises the bad, traits in the usurper's character, representing him as almost wholly wicked.

By this means he is made a centre for some striking character-contrasts: he may be contrasted with Duncan in one way, with Banquo in another, and with Lady Macbeth in still another.

(3) The character of LADY MACBETH on the other hand is improved. In the *Chronicle* she is "verie ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to beare the name of a queene": there is no hint of any gentler side to her nature. In the play her ambition is unselfish and solely for the advancement of her husband whom she loves; while the touch of womanliness in

II. ii. 13–14, gives us a glimpse of a gentler nature, which it must have cost her something to suppress when, by sheer force of will, she " unsexed " herself.

This alteration has been made in order to secure the dramatic interest attached to the struggle between her inflexible will and her womanly feelings.

(4) BANQUO also is whitened by Shakespeare. In Holinshed he was the chief of Macbeth's most trusted friends, and was privy to Macbeth's plans for the murder of Duncan. To this extent, therefore, he shared Macbeth's guilt. In Shakespeare he is one of the finest characters in the play.

As Banquo was the legendary ancestor of James I., he could hardly have been represented by Shakespeare otherwise than as a good character, if the approval of the king were to be won for the play. Besides, as we have already noted, Banquo's virtue serves to bring into sharp relief the evil in Macbeth's nature, especially when they are made to experience, side by side, the same temptation.

(*b*) THE PLOT-PATTERN

The plot of *Macbeth* has been compared to a regular and perfect arch—a description not inappropriate to many plots, but unusually applicable to that of our play. Such a design implies symmetry and balance, a rise and a fall balanced about a central point which is the keystone of the arch; and the sequence of the incidents in *Macbeth* corresponds with this arrangement in a marked degree. We have an uninterrupted

series of successes by means of which Macbeth climbs on a gradual curve, so to speak, up to a crisis; after which we have a similar series of failures which lead steadily downwards to his undoing and his death. The successes, culminating in the murder of Banquo, are either actually crimes, or, though innocent in themselves, strong incentives to crime to a man of Macbeth's character; the failures, beginning with the escape of Fleance, either are, or lead to, punishments for the crimes Macbeth has committed; and the turning-point, the junction of the failures and successes, is in Act III. Sc. iii., the middle of the middle act, the fourteenth scene out of twenty-eight, and almost the mathematical mid-point of the play. It is a striking fact that the most terrible scene on the upward curve, the murder of Duncan, is counterbalanced on the downward side of the arch by an impressive scene which is at once the result and the reflection of the other, namely the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth. The former scene is the ninth from the beginning, and the latter the eighth from the end, of the play.

It is, of course, impossible to separate entirely the incidents from the characters of the play, for the springs of action lie in character; but, if for a moment we lay stress on the characters rather than on their actions, we shall find the same careful balance of sin and retribution giving symmetry to the design. The essence of the tragedy, so far as Macbeth is concerned, lies in the struggle between his ambition and his better nature. In the first half of the play his conscience, or what serves him as a conscience, warns him again and again, and the cause of all his subsequent sins is

that he refuses to listen to it: indeed, controlled by his ambition, he deliberately violates and suppresses it (Act I. Sc. vii.); and retribution comes to him in the shape of something which refuses to be suppressed, a perpetual dread of the horrible and terrifying images which prey upon his mind, and which in the second half of the play lead to his self-betrayal and, indirectly, to his death. The case of Lady Macbeth is similar: she sins against her womanly nature by crushing out of her heart every vestige of pity; and retribution overtakes her, when, in the second half of the play, the strong mind and resolute will on which she has relied to maintain herself in such a terribly unnatural condition, break under the strain, and she becomes a mental and physical wreck.

It is the same in the *grouping* of the characters. The arch-like pattern is again employed, and the figures built into the sides of the arch are balanced one against another. Instead of one principal character there are two, strongly contrasted but linked by a common motive, and sharing the weight of the tragedy which is the result of their joint action. Side by side they pass to the common zenith of their careers, and then in parallel orbits rush swiftly downwards to their deaths in the last act of the play. Banquo, the chief of the minor characters in the first half, is succeeded in the scene immediately following his death (III. iv. 128) by Macduff who, as the agent of retribution, rapidly grows in prominence until he becomes the outstanding minor figure in the second half of the play. Duncan, from whom Macbeth wrests the crown, is a conspicuous figure in the first two acts;

and in the last two is fittingly balanced by his son, Malcolm, who regains from Macbeth the crown of which his father had been deprived.

(c) Shakespeare's Craftsmanship: Some Points of Technique

Such a rise and fall as we have described is common to most things in experience:

> They have their day and cease to be.

Man is born, grows, reaches maturity, declines, and dies; nations develop and decay; plants grow, bloom, and wither. It is much the same with an action, which springs from its cause, reaches its height, and has its consequences; and, since a drama is simply a representation of an action, we may expect to find it following a similar arch-like path. So that Shakespeare may not have consciously arranged the play of *Macbeth* into such a shape; probably he *instinctively* moulded the plot so. But there are many points in the play, at which Shakespeare's genius as a dramatic artist has consciously been at work, and it is to some of these illustrations of his inspired craftsmanship that we wish to draw attention. In these brief notes we cannot do more than tabulate a few typical examples, and we do so in the hope that the reader will be tempted to re-read the play more closely in order to find further examples, for in no other way can he so fully realise the superb skill of Shakespeare as an artist in drama.

(1) Shakespeare generally prefers to arouse our

sense of horror by merely *suggesting* a cause, rather than by showing one plainly, for he knows that

> Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings.

For instance, he makes the witch produce a pilot's thumb (I. iii. 28)—an object too small for the audience to *see*—but she tells us what it is, and imagination does the rest. He might with equal ease have made the witch produce the whole bleeding arm, but the feeling produced by such an exhibition would have been mere physical repulsion, and not the more acute and refined horror of the imagination which as an artist he sought to arouse. It is the same with the death of Duncan: the murder might have been enacted on the stage in full view of the spectators, but we should not then have experienced the frightful tension and suspense which we feel as we wait, listening, with Lady Macbeth, while her husband "is about it" in the chamber of the doomed king. It is one of the most terrible moments in the play, and yet nothing of the murder is to be seen. And so it is with the murder of Banquo (for the torch was dashed out), with Banquo's ghost at the banquet-scene, and with other incidents which we must leave for the reader to inquire into, himself.

(2) Note also the way in which striking contrasts are used to heighten the dramatic effect. The terrible speech of Lady Macbeth (I. v. 40–56), for example, packed with images of darkness and fell cruelty, is placed almost side by side with the opening dialogue of the following scene, every word of which suggests sweetness, delicacy, repose, and security. A similar

contrast is offered in the several loyal speeches made by Macbeth and his wife to Duncan, while they have murder in their hearts; and perhaps the most striking example of all is afforded by the picture (II. iii. 26) of the Porter and his friends drinking and carousing all night in one part of the castle, while murder most foul was being done close by in another.

(3) A third interesting feature of Shakespeare's methods is his strict economy: if one incident can be made to serve two purposes, it is always used in preference to the two that would otherwise be necessary. The ringing of the alarum bell, for instance (II. iii. 60 and 66), is in itself a highly dramatic circumstance which adds to the awfulness of the situation, and at the same time overcomes a mechanical difficulty by providing a means of having all the characters brought together from their bed-chambers on to the stage.

Similarly one character is used, whenever possible, instead of two. It will have been noticed, for example, that Macduff, the character chosen to avenge Scotland on the tyrannical usurper, is at the same time avenging his own private wrong, the murder of his wife and children.

Again in the dialogue, a similar economy may be observed: not a word is wasted, and the speeches are used at once to carry on the story and to reveal the characters of the speakers. In studying the dialogue, examine its relationship to the action: the more dialogue the less action; the more action the less dialogue. Note especially how broken and fragmentary the dialogue becomes when the speakers are under

the influence of some unusually strong emotion. (See the early part of II. ii., for example.)

(4) If the reader will rapidly review in his mind the course of the story of the play, he will find that it passes from point to point of great dramatic excitement and intensity, and that between these points are periods when the action is comparatively quiet and on a lower level, so to speak. If, further, he will examine the text of the play, he will find that these alternate periods of tension and relief correspond generally, though not always, to separate scenes, and that it seems to have been Shakespeare's plan to arrange the scenes deliberately in this way. The relief scenes are of two kinds, short and long. (*a*) If they are short their purpose is to give to the audience a short relief from the strain of the preceding scene, and at the same time to make the tension of the succeeding scene even greater than it would have been without the interruption, just as a stream, temporarily dammed, would rush on with greater force and speed, if the dam were suddenly removed. Thus the short episode of the Porter, part of Act II. Sc. iii., is placed between the murder and its discovery. All the while it is being played, the minds of the audience, though for the moment somewhat eased, are awaiting the opening of the door and the discovery which must inevitably follow. In addition to this, the episode is introduced to provide time for Macbeth and his wife to remove the traces of their crime, and to get into their night-clothes; so that the incident furnishes another example of that economy to which reference has already been made. (*b*) If the relief scenes are

long, in addition to lowering the pitch for a while, they may be used to give explanations necessary for the carrying forward of the story.

(5) Lastly, in this connection, notice should be taken of the skilful manner in which the different threads of the story are interwoven; how one thread disappears as it is crossed by another, and presently re-appears as, perhaps, in its turn it crosses over another. Notice how the right character is always made to appear at the right moment; how, for example, Ross and Angus arrive with the news that Macbeth has been made Thane of Cawdor (I. iii. 89) just at the moment when, after the witches have hailed him by that name, he is wondering whether or not reliance can be placed upon their prophecies. Many other instances, such as the entrances of Banquo's ghost (III. iv. 39), can be found, and may be collected by the reader.

III.—THE CHARACTERS

So far in this Commentary we have dealt chiefly with the incidents of the story, and we must now invite the reader to pass to the study of the characters who take part in them. If we could see the play acted, the personal appearance, manners, and mode of speaking of the actors would help us very much in forming an impression of the characters, because for the time being the actors *are* the characters, and we can actually see them do things and hear them speak; but when we only read the play we form in our minds an image

of each character, and as it is important that this image should be a correct one, it is worth while taking a little trouble to prevent a false impression. In examining the characters for this purpose the following hints may be found useful:

(1) Settle whether the person concerned is a "static" or a developing character; that is, whether he is essentially the same throughout the play, or changes either for the better or the worse. To do this, review the part he plays in the story; and compare his character in the former part of the play with what it is in the latter part. If there has been a change, seek to explain it.

(2) Carefully examine his behaviour especially in crises, when, for instance, he is faced by some sudden and great difficulty, temptation, or choice; for character is generally tested and revealed in a crisis.

(3) Consider with care what he says when he is, or thinks he is, alone. Pay similar attention to what he speaks "aside."

(4) Compare his speeches and his actions in the presence of other characters, with what he secretly thinks and does. (*See* 3.)

(5) Collect what is said about him by other characters—friends and enemies alike—and especially what is said about him in his absence.

(6) Having carefully weighed all the evidence, draw your conclusions, taking care that no part of his character is totally inconsistent with another part. If there seems to be any such inconsistency, seek a clue to it, for the "character" you formulate must not be based merely on one or two incidents, but must

be confirmed by and explain every speech and action with which he is connected.

As it seems important that the reader should form his own opinions of the characters in the play, no ready-made estimates, which might affect the independent use of his judgment, are included in this commentary; but to help him on his way, in the case of Macbeth only, the following sign-posts have been inserted:

Note the complexity of Macbeth's character. Does his character change? Is he ambitious? selfish? How is his ambition fostered? His physical bravery. The peculiar nature of his conscience. His fears and their causes. His imagination and superstition.

IV.—THE BACKGROUND

By the background or settings of a play we mean the circumstances under which the events are represented as taking place. These circumstances may, for convenience, be considered under three headings:

(*a*) General Dramatic Background.
(*b*) Place-Settings.
(*c*) Time-Settings.

(*a*) General Dramatic Background

In constructing a play, an author has not merely to arrange as a background any chance set of circumstances for which any other chance set might be

substituted without greatly affecting the play either for the better or the worse: in the hands of a skilful dramatist the background is always made to contribute its proper share to the general effect of the play, and the circumstances are chosen with this object in view.

In a tragedy like *Macbeth*, where treachery and cruelty do their evil work side by side, where murder and violence hasten pitilessly from one victim to another, and where passions, impulses, and emotions meet in confused struggle, only one appropriate background could be possible—that of darkness and storm; and it is precisely against a background of this kind that Shakespeare displays the tragic figures of his play. From the very first scene with its thunderstorm and gloomy "desert place," the atmosphere is heavy with the suggestion of evil and the sense of impending calamity; and this effect is very largely one of background. At least fourteen out of the twenty-eight scenes take place either at night, in the late evening, in the gloom of a cavern, or under the blackness of a thunder-sky; the four most impressive scenes in the play—the famous dagger-scene, the murder of Duncan, the banquet-scene, and the sleep-walking of Lady Macbeth—all take place at night; and on the day after the night of Duncan's death, the face of the sun is hidden, and "darkness does the face of earth entomb" (II. iv.). Again, each of the four appearances of the witches is accompanied by a thunderstorm, the night of the king's murder was "rough" and unruly, and a gale was blowing on the day when (V. v. 50) Macbeth went forth to his last

fight. So that darkness and storm appear to form the larger part of the background of the play.

Now, although, because of their nature and associations, darkness and storm produce on our minds an effect of weirdness and awe, there is nothing unnatural in them, any more than there is in an eclipse of the sun (II. iv. 7), an earthquake (II. iii. 46), the hooting of an owl during the "livelong night" (II. iii. 45), the fact that a mousing owl should kill a falcon (II. iv. 13), or that horses should turn "wild in nature," and break their stalls (II. iv. 14). Such occurrences are sufficiently rare to make them striking to our imagination, but they are neither impossible nor entirely unnatural—especially if they should happen singly. It is because they occur not singly, but almost together, that they take on a supernatural appearance, and prepare us to accept the things that are really supernatural—the "lamentings heard i' the air," the "strange screams of death, and prophesying with accents terrible of dire combustion and confused events." It is a short step from this to be almost as credulous as Ross (II. iv.), who imagined he saw the king's horses eat each other.

These minor details are, of course, used merely to intensify the main supernatural background which gathers behind the witches and their weird apparatus; their cauldron and its ghastly contents, their spells and charms, their secret dance and song, their evil occupations, their power of prophecy, and their ability to call up ghostly apparitions. Indeed, the witches themselves are less "characters" in the play than parts of the background, connecting-links with

that dark world of evil ruled over by Satan and the witches' "masters," from whom they gain their supernatural and malignant powers.

It is the dark mystery of this supernatural world —a world suggested rather than revealed—that deepens the effect of storm and darkness into that sustained awfulness which forms the ideal dramatic background for a tragic action.

(*b*) Place-Settings

The scene in which Malcolm tests the good faith of Macduff (IV. iii.) is laid in England, but with this exception all the place-settings of the play are in Scotland and, for the most part, in the northern Highlands, a district very difficult of access and unfamiliar to most English play-goers in the time of Shakespeare. This remoteness of scene would help to intensify the weird effect produced, as we have seen, by the general dramatic background.

Eleven of the scenes, including Macbeth's meetings with the witches (presumably), the murder of Banquo, and the ensuing banquet-scene, are represented as taking place at or in the neighbourhood of Forres, now a quaint little market town near the mouth of the romantic river Findhorn. Of the "palace" there is now no trace, unless it be in the green mound, adjoining the town and undoubtedly the site of a castle much older than the ruin at present standing there. Local tradition has it that Macbeth once occupied this castle. About half a mile from the town rises a shaft of grey sandstone about twenty-three feet high and

carved strangely on both sides in the Celtic fashion. It is popularly believed to have been erected in the early eleventh century to commemorate some such victory over the Danes as that recorded in the play, and is known as Sweno's Stone. Barely five miles west of Forres, and just south of the railway between that town and Nairn, lies a stretch of rough ground now covered with fir-trees and known as the Hardmuir. Legend says that this was the "blasted heath" of the play, and that the fir-covered knoll known as "Macbeth's Hillock" was the spot where he and Banquo enquired of the witches the distance to Forres. Seen on a gloomy day the place is eerie enough to lend colour to the tale.

Several places assert their claims to have been the scene of the murder of Duncan. Among them is CAWDOR CASTLE, about midway between Forres and Inverness, where the visitor is shown "Duncan's Chamber"; but as the oldest part of the present building dates only from 1454, its claims may be dismissed as obviously unsound. Sir Walter Scott preferred to place the scene at the ancient castle of GLAMIS in Forfarshire. As, however, the historical Duncan was slain at "Enuernes, or as some say at Botgosuane," and as Shakespeare chose to make use of the circumstances attending the murder of Duff, which, according to Holinshed, occurred at the castle of Forres, there seems no reason why we should not simply follow the stage-directions (inserted by early editors and deduced from the text), and think of the murder as happening at INVERNESS. If, as some people think, Shakespeare visited Scotland, he may

have seen, on the site of the present gaol and County Court buildings at Inverness, a royal fortress built by Malcolm Canmore (the Malcolm of the play) after the defeat of Macbeth in 1057. If so, he might possibly have this castle in mind when he wrote the seven scenes which according to the stage-instructions are laid in Inverness. The castle which Macbeth held as Mormaer of Ross and Moray would be of still earlier date than this, and probably stood on the Crown, a prominent hill at the east of the town, with a view of the estuary of the Ness and the open sea. It might well have called forth Duncan's remark:

> This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
> Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses. (I. vi. 1-3.)

The place-settings of Act V. are all in the neighbourhood of DUNSINNAN, one of the Sidlaw Hills in Perthshire. It is a flat-topped, conical hill, and on its summit are the remains of an ancient fort known locally as Macbeth's Castle. Some twelve miles away to the west, and on the other side of the Tay valley, rises the high hill of BIRNAM with its famous beeches. On a clear day the one hill can be easily seen from the other, but not, of course, with sufficient distinctness to discern details. It is thought, therefore, that the royal forest of which Birnam Hill was certainly a part may have stretched eastwards to within three miles of Dunsinnan, and still borne the name of Birnam Wood. If the army of Malcolm and Siward cut the boughs in this part of the wood, it would have been possible for Macbeth's watchman on Dunsinnan

Hill to have seen "the moving grove" crossing the valley and approaching Macbeth's castle on the hill.

According to the play, the murder of Macduff's wife and children took place at his castle in Fife, which legend identifies with DUNNE-MERLE or DUNIMARLE CASTLE, near Culross, on the Fife coast of the Firth of Forth. The handsome structure at present standing is comparatively modern, but near it are traces of the older castle.

In addition to the above local backgrounds there are what may be called secondary or *implied* place-settings, that is to say the scenes of events about which we are told, but which we do not actually witness in the acting of the play. Thus, for example, we know that Macbeth was crowned at Scone, although the ceremony of his coronation is not presented to us. It will be convenient to deal with these implied settings in a list as follows:—

1. COLME-KILL, or ICOLMKILL (II. iv. 33), is another name (meaning the Island of St. Columba's Cell or Chapel) for Iona, the famous island whence, after St. Columba settled there in 563, Christianity was spread over the greater part of Scotland. As we turn over the pages of Holinshed's *Chronicle* we find it recorded of king after king that he was buried in the burial-ground of the Abbey on the island. Duncan was first buried in Elgin, but his body was afterwards removed to "Colme-kill and there laid in sepulture amongst his predecessors." The ancient burial ground lies around the chapel of St. Oran, and the last king of Scotland buried there is said to have been Macbeth.

2. ST. COLME'S INCH (I. ii. 61) = St. Columba's Island,

is the island of Inchcolm in the Firth of Forth, about one and a half miles from the Fife coast, and two or three miles east of the present Forth Bridge. It contains the ruins of an abbey built by Alexander I., and traces of a more ancient chapel or cell, the hermitage, according to tradition, of one of St. Columba's monks.

3. SCONE (II. iv. 31), about two miles north of Perth, was the ancient capital of Scotland, and here the early Scottish kings had their "palace" and were crowned in the Abbey. There is still a Scone Palace, of quite modern date, which probably stands on or near the site of the older building. Like Macbeth, all the Scottish kings from Kenneth II. to James VI. were crowned here; and here, until Edward I. of England had it removed to Westminster Abbey, was the famous Coronation Stone, which legend says was the Stone of Bethel used as a pillow by Jacob on the night when he dreamed his dream (*Genesis*, Chap. 28).

(*c*) TIME-SETTINGS

In dealing with the time-settings we must give our consideration to two matters: (1) the general historical background, and (2) the immediate time-setting during which the action of the play takes place.

As regards the first of these sufficient has, perhaps, been already said in the first part of the Introduction, to which reference may again be made. For those who may be interested a short account of the

true history of the times, so far as it can be determined, will be found at the end of this Commentary (p. 180).

It has been calculated by Shakespearean scholars that the events embodied in *Macbeth* happen on nine separate days, with intervals here and there which extend the dramatic time to two or three months. The events are usually distributed over the nine days as follows:

Day 1. Act I. Scenes i.–iii.

Day 2. Act I. Scenes iv.–vii.

Day 3. Act II. Scenes i.–iv.

An interval of about two weeks, to allow for Macbeth's journeys to and from Scone, and for the coronation ceremony there.

Day 4. Act III. Scenes i.–v.

[It is impossible to fix the time of Act III. Sc. vi., because it occurs between Act III. Sc. iv. (where Macbeth says, as he retires to bed, that (1) he *will* send to Macduff at the latter's "house" (lines 130–133); and (2) he will visit the witches *next day*), and Act IV. Sc. i., where the visit is paid to the witches. The "other lord" tells Lennox (Sc. vi l. 40) that Macbeth has sent to Macduff and received an answer—an impossibility if the messenger has had to go to Macduff's castle in Fife, whither Macduff went in II. iv. 36.]

Day 5. Act IV. Scene i.

Day 6. Act IV. Scene ii.

An interval of about two weeks to allow for Ross's journey to England.

Day 7. Act IV. Scene iii. and Act V. Scene i.

An interval of several weeks to allow for the coming of Malcolm's army into Scotland.

Day 8. Act V. Scenes ii. and iii.

Day 9. Act V. Scenes iv.–viii.

(*d*) Shakespeare's Method of Presenting the Background

Nowadays with our elaborate stage machinery, painted stage scenery, and artificial, coloured lights, it is not a difficult matter to present to an audience the scenic background of a play. The author merely says in his stage-directions what setting he requires and the theatre provides it. But in Shakespeare's day the absence of any such devices in connection with the stage made it necessary for the dramatist to provide for the background *in the play itself*. As the background could not be presented actually, he had to make the audience imagine it, with the result that references to or descriptions of the settings are embodied in the text. Thus, for example, in the case of the murder of Banquo, we have lines like the following:

> Light thickens and the crow
> Makes wing to the rooky wood:
> Good things of day begin to droop and drowse.
> (III. ii.)
>
> The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day.
> Now spurs the lated traveller apace
> To gain the timely inn. (III. iii.)

and we learn from the dialogue that the attack was made at a short distance from the palace gate.

At the same time we must remember the dramatist's need for the brevity and economy referred to in this Commentary; and perhaps this is why we do not find in Shakespeare any long descriptions of extended landscape: he gives us only such details as will serve to bring into our minds the immediate scene. These are, however, sketched in strong, firm, graphic lines,

and with unerring accuracy of view. Thus, for example, we have a wonderful picture—so far as its effect on our imagination is concerned—of Macbeth's castle at Inverness in the steady light of the evening when Duncan and his party arrived before it (I. vi.); but we have no reference to the wide view of mountain, river, wood, and sea, which the situation of the castle must have afforded.

So far as the general dramatic background is concerned, it may be noted that the effect of darkness and awful gloom is partly produced by the use in the text of a large number of words which have dark and awful associations. Thus, to select from one speech only, we have words like *raven, croaks, fatal, blood, murdering, night, pall, dunnest, smoke, hell, knife, wound, dark,* etc., all of which have acquired in our experience grim associations which their use in the play calls up, perhaps without our knowing it, into our minds.

V.—AN OUTLINE OF SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

In a modern theatre when a play has been performed for the first time, and has succeeded in pleasing the audience, it is a common occurrence for those who have witnessed the play to call for the author. Such curiosity is not unnatural, and now that we have read *Macbeth* and appreciated its greatness as a work of art, we may be similarly interested in learning something of the man by whom it was penned.

There are many things about William Shakespeare

which we should like to know, but which have not yet been discovered. On the other hand a very considerable mass of information concerning him is available, in the more important of his biographies, for those who wish to explore the subject further than is possible in the few pages at our disposal in this book. All we can do here is to recount in meagre outline some of the more important facts of his life and career.

His father, John Shakespeare, was in early life a successful general agricultural merchant of Stratford-on-Avon, of which town he rose to be High Bailiff in 1568, and Chief Alderman three years later. In 1557 he married Mary Arden, the younger daughter and heiress of a prosperous farmer of Wilmcote, a village near Stratford, and she would bring to her husband a house and some land near Wilmcote. So that their married life was begun unhampered by any shortage of means, and when in April, 1564, their third child, William Shakespeare, was born in their Stratford home, they were living in very comfortable circumstances and considerable prosperity.

In due course, probably about 1571, the boy would enter the old Free Grammar School at Stratford, where he would receive a sound and thorough school training in Latin, grammar, and writing in old English script. His knowledge of French was most likely acquired later. Precisely to what point in the school course Shakespeare was able to pursue his studies we cannot tell, but we know that he was withdrawn from school at the early age of thirteen years. His father's fortunes had then for a year or two been on the decline,

and perhaps for this reason it was found necessary to send William to work. Things must have been rather bad, for the following year we find John Shakespeare compelled to mortgage his wife's estate for what at the present day would amount to about £350. So that the future dramatist must at an early age have come face to face with some of the anxieties of life.

But the lessons which Shakespeare learnt in his boyhood would not be merely those he received at school. In the neighbourhood of his birthplace is some of the finest pastoral and wooded scenery in England, and this could not fail to influence a boy so receptive of influences as Shakespeare must have been. Moreover it would have been strange, indeed, if the son of a well-to-do townsman, occupying a high civic position in Stratford, did not have an opportunity of seeing some of the famous pageants at Coventry, a town crowded with romantic associations and only twenty miles from his home. Again, Queen Elizabeth visited the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth Castle when Shakespeare was eleven years old, and the splendid fêtes held there in her honour would doubtless be considered worth travelling fifteen miles to see. Such spectacles as these were bound to impress themselves on Shakespeare's imagination and would be stored up in his mind for future use.

About his life during the five years after he had left school we have practically no information, but it is said that he served as an apprentice to a butcher, perhaps to his own father, as the sale of meat appears to have been one of the branches of John Shakespeare's business. At the end of these five years, when he was

only nineteen years old, he was married to Anne Hathaway of Shottery, a small village hard by Stratford, where her reputed home, or part of it, may still be seen. Anne was six years older than he, and there is some reason for thinking that his married life was not entirely happy. Within the next three or four years his three children were born, and whether because he felt that he could not earn sufficient in his native town to support his family adequately, or because of domestic unhappiness, or again, as tradition asserts, because he had made a powerful enemy in the person of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, he appears to have left Stratford in 1586, in all probability for London.

For the next six years or so the record of his life is almost a blank. The only thing we know about him is that he must have obtained employment at one of the playhouses which he would find in London—either at The Theatre or at The Curtain, and more probably at the former. In a short while he became attached to a company of players licensed by the Earl of Leicester, and subsequently by the Lord Chamberlain. Gradually his talents as an actor and as a skilful adapter and re-writer of plays by other authors asserted themselves and led him to try his hand at original plays. *Love's Labour's Lost* was probably first written in 1591, and during the next twenty years he produced the long series of magnificent plays which have made his name immortal. In 1592 he had become sufficiently famous to arouse the professional jealousy of Robert Greene, an accomplished writer, who savagely attacked Shakespeare in *A Groat'sworth of Wit*. This spiteful

attack does not appear to have affected Shakespeare at all, as play after play was written, and by 1594, when he acted before the Queen, his success was assured.

Between that year and 1601 appeared most of his great comedies and histories, among them *The Merchant of Venice, King John, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Henry IV., The Merry Wives of Windsor, Henry V., Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night,* and *Julius Cæsar.*

It is a pleasing thing to note that in the day of his prosperity he did not forget his father, and saw to it that the last five years of John Shakespeare's life were free from the money troubles which had previously oppressed him. Nor does he seem to have lost his attachment to his native place, for after an absence of more than ten years he returned to it on a visit almost certainly in 1596, and from that date until he finally left London, there was hardly a year in which he did not pay at least one visit to the town. By 1599 he was enjoying a good income, and his investments showed a practical business shrewdness that we do not always associate with our greatest men of letters. It was the same shrewdness that led him, as we have already seen, to write a play dealing with Scotland and witchcraft, subjects well calculated to secure the patronage of King James. In 1597 he had bought New Place, a large house in Stratford, and subsequently he made purchases of land adjoining it; while in 1599 he bought shares in the Globe Theatre, then newly built by the Burbage brothers. After the accession of James I. to the English throne he became one of

the chief of the King's Players, and entered on a period of the greatest prosperity.

It is a strange thing that at this very time Shakespeare seems to have lost faith in human life. None knew life better than he, and none had depicted it with more of the zest and light-hearted, buoyant, joyousness that light up his comedies; but about 1601 gloom seems to have settled over him, and the dark power of evil, the tragedy of its often successful struggle with good, the spectacle of men, tempted like Macbeth, and lured to destruction, filled him with sadness and despair. Life lost its significance for him, and though it would be both unfair and absurd to attribute to Shakespeare as his own the sentiments he merely puts into the mouths of his characters, we should perhaps not be very far wrong if we concluded that something of Shakespeare's own feeling found expression in Macbeth's hopeless words on the vanity and futility of life:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> *Signifying nothing.* (V. v. 23-27.)

It was during this period that, as we might expect, he wrote his greatest tragedies. His art had then reached its zenith and found an outlet in those great plays which embody some of the darkest and bitterest problems of life. They appeared in succession: *Hamlet* in 1602, *Othello* in 1604, *Macbeth* in 1606, and *King Lear* in 1607. Other tragedies like *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* followed, and the period may be said to have closed in 1609.

We cannot but feel glad that if the views of life expressed in these plays were, in any degree, really held by Shakespeare during those eight years of depression, they were not at any rate his final views. His last three plays, *Cymbeline* (1610), *The Winter's Tale* (1611), and *The Tempest* (1611), if they do not exhibit all the sunny, sparkling joyousness of his comedies, show at least that the cloud had passed, that his faith in human virtue was in a measure restored, and that, serenely and steadily, he could now look on life in its manifold phases, and see it whole. With these three plays he bade farewell to his work as a dramatist and actor.

> I'll break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
> I'll drown my book.

In 1611 he retired to Stratford, where for five years —all too short a time it seems to us—he reaped, in the quiet life of a country gentleman, varied by occasional visits to London, the harvest of his industry and energy. His elder daughter, Susannah, had been married in 1607, and he lived just long enough to see his younger daughter, Judith, also settled in wedded life early in 1616. On 23rd April of that year he solved the last of life's problems—the mystery of death. His remains lie buried within the chancel of Stratford Church, and over his grave are inscribed the lines:

> Good Frend, for Iesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust encloased heare.
> Blest be y^e^ man y^t^ spares thes stones,
> And curst be he y^t^ moves my bones.

VI.—THE METRE OF THE PLAY

Portions of three scenes (II. iii. 1–23, IV. ii. 39–63, V. i. 1–74) are written in prose; in the first two cases to lower the dramatic pitch for the purpose of sudden contrast, and in the third as a more suitable medium than verse for representing the wanderings of Lady Macbeth's broken mind. Macbeth's letter to his wife (I. v.) is, of course, also in prose.

The rest of the play is in verse, and with the exceptions of the witches' chants, and the rhyming couplets used to mark the ends of scenes or to finish off speeches, the form used is "blank" or unrhymed verse. The regular blank verse line consists of five metrical feet, each of two syllables, the first of which is unaccented and the second accented. If we make *U* stand for the unaccented syllable and *A* for the accented one, the line may be represented thus:

UA | UA | UA | UA | UA

The following regular line is from the play:

Upón | my héad | they pláced | a frúit- | less crówn.

The earlier writers of blank verse kept strictly to this regular form, and the unbroken succession of such lines in their work tends to make it monotonous and somewhat artificial. To avoid this fault, later writers, like Marlowe for example, found it necessary to introduce slight irregularities into the line, and, in a general way, it is true to say of Shakespeare that his power as a writer of blank verse increased with

his mastery of the means of variation. The chief of these employed by him are here set forth:

(*a*) Variation in the Position of the Strong Accent

The accent may be inverted, *i.e.*, may fall on the first syllable of the foot instead of on the second. This may occur in any foot and more than once in the same line. It frequently follows a pause and is most often found in the first foot of a line, following the pause at the end of the preceding line.

Iś to ¦ avóid | the aím. | Thérefore | to hórse. (II. iii. 130.)
Nímbly | and swéet- | ly ré- | comménds | itsélf. (I. vi. 2.)

(*b*) Variation in the Strength of the Accent

When we read aloud certain lines we find that the voice lays more stress on some of the accented syllables than it does on others. Accented syllables may, therefore, be divided into two kinds:

(1) Those strongly accented, and
(2) Those more lightly accented,

the accent in the latter case being known as a "light" or "weak" accent. The use of such weak accents is one of the most important means of preventing monotony, and for this reason Shakespeare often substitutes a weak accent for:

(*a*) A strong one, especially when the accent falls on short monosyllabic words, like many of the prepositions and conjunctions.

To hálf | a soúl | and tò | a nó- | tion crázed. (III. i. 83.)

(*b*) An unaccented syllable, thus making a doubly stressed foot.

Thine ówn | lífe's méans! | Thén 'tis | most líke. (II. iv. 29.)
Bálm of | hùrt mínds, | grèat ná- | ture's sé- | cond cóurse. (II. ii. 39.)

Every foot must have either one strong accent or *at least one* weak accent (*i.e.*, it may have two).

(*c*) Variation in the Number of Syllables

(1) An extra *unaccented* syllable may be inserted in any foot which has only one accented syllable.

The múl- | titú- | dĭnŏus séas | incár- | nadíne. (II. ii. 62.)

(2) An extra *unaccented* syllable, *not part of any foot*, may occur,

(*a*) sometimes near the middle of a line, especially before a pause.

Give mé | the dág- | *gers*: | the sléep- | ing ànd | the déad. (II. ii. 53.)

(*b*) more often at the end of a line, when it is called a "double" or "feminine" ending. Occasionally there are two such syllables.

Comménds | the ingré- | dients òf | our pói- | son'd chál- | *ice*. (I. vii. 11.)
My thóught, | whose múr- | der yét | is bút | fantás- | *tical*. (I. iii. 139.)

(3) Sometimes the line appears to have six feet instead of five, and, when there are six unmistakable accents, is called an Alexandrine.

As cán- | nons ó- | vercharged | with dóu- | ble cracks; | so they. (I. ii. 37.)

The number of cases, however, in which this is really so, is small, and usually the line may be made into a five foot line (*a*) by slurring or eliding, or (*b*) by overlapping a foot when one speaker may be supposed to begin to speak before the other has finished.

(*a*) Thus the line

And àn | etér- | nal cúrse | fáll on | you! Lét | me knów.

may be scanned

And àn | etér- | nal cúrse | fáll on you! | Let me knów.
(IV. i. 103.)

(*b*) *Macb.* Resolve yourselves apart:
I'll cóme | to yóu | anón. |
Both Mur. | We áre | resólved, | my lórd.
(III. i. 139.)

Ross. The víc- | t(o)ry féll | on ús. |
Dunc. Grèat háp- | pinéss! |
Ross. | That nów |
(I. ii. 58.)

(4) On the other hand there is in this play an unusually large number of short lines, containing only four, three, or even two accents. Many of these are no doubt due to the imperfect condition of the text, but others may be accounted for in a variety of ways. Thus a gesture may take the place of a spoken foot:

I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this | which nów | I dráw | — | — | (II. i. 41.)

a pause may be continued, so as to do duty for a syllable accented or unaccented, and sometimes even for a whole foot:

The cúr- | tained sléep. | — Witch- | craft cél- | ebrátes.
(II. i. 51.)

or, in broken, excited, or impassioned dialogue a short, incomplete line may be used to give emphasis, and is

more natural to a speech in such circumstances than regular verse without such an interruption would be. Examples may be found in I. ii. 41, III. iv. 51, V. iii. 34.

(*d*) Variation by "Overflow"

In the blank verse of Shakespeare's earlier plays most of the lines are "end-stopt," that is, the end of the line corresponds with a pause in the sense, sometimes shown by a mark of punctuation, but not necessarily so. This was probably the result of a habit acquired while writing his earliest works in rhyming couplets, for the nature of a couplet is such that the writer tends to confine and complete the sense within the limits of the couplet. As he gained power in the use of blank verse, however, Shakespeare refused to be limited in this manner, and allowed the sense to "overflow," without any pause, from one line into another. Lines of this type are known as "unstopt" or "run-on" lines.

The proportion of "run-on" to "end-stopt" lines, like the use of "double endings," is an important guide to the dates of many of the plays. The presence of a large number of "unstopt" lines in *Macbeth* marks it as one of the plays written in the maturity of his art.

VII. THE LANGUAGE OF THE PLAY

(*a*) Shakespeare's Imagery

One of the most striking features in connection with the language of the play is the quantity and richness of the imagery employed by Shakespeare. Similes and metaphors are lavishly distributed through almost every scene, and are generally both apt and beautiful. Consider, for example, how Macbeth piles up image after image in his famous lines on sleep (II. ii. 37):

> Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
> The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
> Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
> Chief nourisher in life's feast.

How fitting, also, is the description by the Sergeant of the undecided battle (I. ii. 7):

> Doubtful it stood;
> As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
> And choke their art.

Or again, how apt is the comparison expressed in the words of Lady Macbeth (II. ii. 53):

> The sleeping and the dead
> Are but as pictures.

Many of the figures in the play are taken from nature. Lady Macbeth tells her husband to "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under 't" (I. v. 67); or again, this life is compared to "a bank and shoal of time" (I. vii. 6); and when, towards the end of the play Macbeth's troubles come fast and

thick upon him, his " way of life is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf " (V. iii. 22).

Naturally enough, Shakespeare not infrequently takes his metaphors from the language of the stage. In illustration of this we have, among other instances, the lines in I. iii.:

> Two truths are told
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme.

and the well-known passage in V. v.:

> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more.

(*b*) Plays upon Words

Of that juggling with language, the puns and verbal quibbles, so frequent in Shakespeare's early plays, we have comparatively few examples in *Macbeth*. As his poetic art developed he seems to have discarded such tricks of language as rather cheap devices not always in the best of taste. Consequently when they are used at all in *Macbeth*, they are generally put into the mouths of characters like the Porter or the boy Macduff, where they are not out of keeping with the character of the speaker. When they are used in other cases it is generally with the intention of securing some telling dramatic effect, as in the terrible instance where Lady Macbeth, all her womanly feelings crushed out by sheer force of will, puns as she enters again the chamber of the murdered king (II. ii. 55):

> If he do bleed,
> I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
> For it must seem their guilt.

VIII.—THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE MACBETHAN PERIOD

ALTHOUGH Shakespeare, as we have seen, drew a great part of his material from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, he did not hesitate to alter what he found there, or to add material of his own invention, whenever it suited his purpose to do so. Besides, Holinshed and his fellow chroniclers, as we now know, were in many respects unreliable and inaccurate, so that a great part of the " history " in the play is, as it were, doubly removed from the facts. As, however, Shakespeare was constructing a play and not writing a history, this lack of historical accuracy does not in the least detract from the value of the play as a work of art; and the few facts of true Macbethan history which follow are given merely that the reader may not fall into the error of supposing that the history of Scotland in the time of Macbeth is entirely as recorded in the play.

The historical outline given in the Introduction may be regarded as authentic, except where it is expressly stated that it depends merely on tradition or on the accounts given in old chronicles, in which cases it is open to doubt. In addition to the information there provided the following facts should be noted.

Modern historians can find no trace, in Duncan's reign, of an invasion of Fife by Sweno or any other Norseman. Nor do they admit any rebellion in Lochaber. Duncan's reign was, however, full of trouble. An expedition led by him into Northumbria suffered a severe defeat, and shortly afterwards his cousin

Thorfinn began to give trouble in the north. Thorfinn had been confirmed by Duncan in the Earldom of Caithness and Sutherland, and now refused to pay tribute to the king. Accordingly, Duncan sought to replace him by another kinsman named Moddan, who in 1040 led an army into the north to win his newly granted territory, while Duncan himself went to his support with a fleet of ships, sailing through Pentland Firth with the evident object of cutting off Thorfinn from the Orkneys where he had previously strongly established himself. They were defeated both by sea and land, and although the king managed to escape and reach land, his nephew Moddan was killed at Thurso by Thorfinn himself. Gathering his forces together Duncan retired into Moray, where he once more made a stand, but was again badly defeated. His succession of failures and his fugitive condition led to his death at the hands of Macbeth, probably in " the smith's bothy " [1] near Elgin, and not far from the scene of his latest battle. As Macbeth, who was Mormaer of Moray, would probably be jealous of his neighbour, the Jarl of Caithness and Sutherland, and as the king evidently retired on Moray to recruit his forces, it is improbable that Macbeth slew Duncan in the interests of Thorfinn. He was probably tempted by the opportunity and made the most of it, in the fierce fashion of these primitive times.

Macbeth at once seized the crown, and for the seventeen years during which his reign lasted, he seems to have governed vigorously and well. He was very liberal in his gifts to the church and may even, it is

[1] Hut.

thought, have gone on a pilgrimage to Rome. It is certain that he held all parts of his dominion closely together, and received loyal support from most of his subjects. Two attacks were made against him on behalf of Duncan's son, Malcolm; the first by the grandfather of that prince, Crinan, in 1045, and the second by Siward, Earl of Northumbria, in 1054. Macbeth successfully and entirely crushed the rebellion of Crinan, but appears to have been defeated, although not decisively, by Earl Siward. Three years later, in 1057, Siward being dead, Malcolm himself invaded Scotland and Macbeth was slain, probably in battle, at Lumphanan in Aberdeenshire. His stepson, Lulach, carried on the struggle for a few months until his death, when Malcolm succeeded to the throne as Malcolm III.

As to some of the chief characters in the play, it may be pointed out that Duncan was a young man and not the elderly monarch depicted by Shakespeare; that Banquo, Fleance, and Macduff are unknown to history, and are probably inventions of the chroniclers; that Macbeth was not the son of Sinel, thane of Glamis, but of Finnlaec, Mormaer of Moray; and that nothing is known of the fate of Lady Macbeth.

AN ACTING APPENDIX

By Evelyn Smith, B.A.

School and university players who will confidently produce comedies of subtle and delicate atmosphere—comedies such as *Much Ado* and *Twelfth Night*—seldom undertake Shakespearean tragedy, and this is rather a strange thing. The reason cannot be modest consciousness of limited powers, for Greek tragedy is sometimes creditably presented by amateur companies. Nor is it youth's supposed natural aversion from tragedy. Many boys and girls date their love of Shakespeare from their first reading of *Macbeth*. Were count made, probably more people over than under thirty would be found in a music-hall or pantomime audience, while, at any good performance of Shakespearean tragedy (I except those given for school children) the preponderance of young men and women in the less expensive parts of the house is noticeable. It is true that tragic acting is difficult—that the greatest English actors have put their best work into Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, and Othello, and sent many of their hearers away dissatisfied, but it is also true that many who came to praise Falstaff, Malvolio, Jaques, Beatrice, and Rosalind, have gone away to grumble. No school company is likely to attain perfection in its rendering of any drama, but it is quite likely to do well enough to excite interest and pleasure, and, if it can make a good thing of the Forest of Arden, it may also be effective with the blasted heath near Forres, if it can dare the wit of Rosalind it can dare the will of Lady Macbeth. After all, the heroine was originally played by a boy, in tragedy

as well as in comedy. Human nature does not change, and what the Elizabethan youth did on the stage of the Globe Theatre some twentieth-century boy can do in his school hall. The heroine of *Macbeth*, it is true, is intensely feminine, but her femininity is of a type that does not bewilder, though it may exasperate, the male mind. There are certain characters in Shakespearean drama which seem to belong exclusively to their sex. It is doubtful whether a woman ever fully appreciates Falstaff; and Shakespeare himself appears to have wondered what his "heroine" would make of Cleopatra. But, even on the modern stage, with both sexes to choose from, women have played Hamlet, and (with perhaps one cut) the part of Lady Macbeth may be acted with great success by an imaginative boy. If he can impersonate a tragic heroine, he can impersonate a tragic hero. And the whole play, with its quick movement, its witch scenes and battle scenes, is particularly suitable for acting by boys.

In the acting of tragedy there are certain pitfalls to be avoided. Comedy is spoiled by the methods of farce; tragedy must not be acted as melodrama. Shakespeare cared less for the preservation of his plays than does a writer for the cinema for that of his "drama in seven reels." He does not seem to have resented the interpolation of Middleton's work to increase the masque-like element in Macbeth. But he did care how his tragedies were acted. He deplored the shouting and sawing the air with the hand, the out-Heroding Herod, the methods which would split the ears of the groundlings. Hamlet describes some robustious periwig-pated fellow tearing a passion to tatters, and his impatient—"I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines," comes from the heart of his creator. But immediately he adds: "Be not too tame neither," for there must be a certain exaggeration in the dramatic rendering of things, the actor must be

allowed a certain heightening of gesture and tone as the poet is allowed his rhythm and the artist his paint and the composer of opera his interpretation through music. The play cannot be merely a photographic representation of what people do in real life. But the conventions of acting must contain mind—they must be an intellectual interpretation of reality. I have heard a girl with a good voice loudly declaim Lady Macbeth's first soliloquy. The woman is not in a declamatory mood. Her mind is working in a terrible way, it is "terrible in constant resolution," but it is not noisy and hysterical, it is quiet, firm, set, entirely certain of itself. That passage, like most soliloquies, is to be spoken, not shouted. But Mrs. Siddons, the great tragic actress, raised her voice to a real scream of hysteria in the passage where the woman cries that she would have dashed out her child's brains rather than step aside from the course from which Macbeth swerves so easily. That may not be the only way in which to interpret her mood at that moment, but it is an artistic and therefore satisfying way. The utterance contains natural feeling and is yet counter to nature, it is monstrous, and with its tenderness and ferocity could hardly be spoken in a normal voice. Had she not spoken of her love for the baby at her breast, had she simply said that she could have dashed its brains out rather than broken her word, the lines might be spoken with resolution and not a trace of hysteria—the crowding together of the memory of the tenderest emotion and the boast of the most unnatural act of a mother brings hysteria—hysteria of a kind peculiar to this woman. Again, there are two famous phrases of Macbeth's you hear ranted before you have read the play—perhaps the two of Shakespeare's that you first get to know—"Is this a dagger that I see before me?" and "Lay on, Macduff!" Everyone knows the tone in which the former is spoken. I don't think it became a catchword in Shakespeare's own time, as did

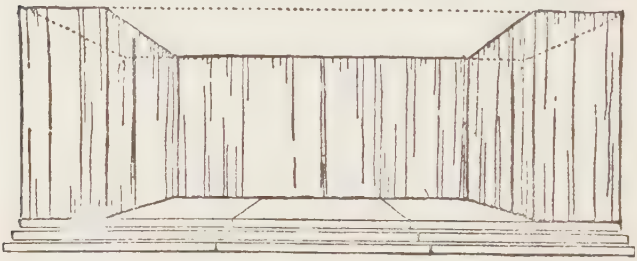
the "Hamlet, revenge!" of the ghost who blubbered like an oyster-wife in the first version of that play, but it is certainly a family catchword now. If you read the whole speech you will see that there is no reason to declaim this line. Macbeth, with the strength of whose "imaginings" the audience is already familiar, really thinks that the thing is there. The first moment of hallucination is not fearful, unless the thing seen is in itself particularly terrifying. The fearfulness begins when you know that the eyes do not see the vision, that it is not "real." Macbeth thinks this thing so real that he tries to take hold of it. Doubt begins with the word "clutch," the real horror with "I have thee not, and yet I see thee still." But he struggles for self-control, tries not to see the dagger, looks away and looks back to find it stained with gouts of blood, looks away again, manages to win control over his senses. "There's no such thing." Then his tortured fantasy begins to weave fresh horrors. Now all that demands a most varied play of mind and emotion —and yet the whole passage is sometimes delivered as if the man passed through a monotonous phase of delirium. The cry—"Lay on, Macduff!" may be shouted as loud as you like. That is pure frenzy—battle-cry, challenge, defiance of a great soldier making his last stand. Make a careful analysis of the mood behind the word, and you will do well. So often good acting is spoiled because there is not enough mind in it—the actor is successfully someone else, but not the part for which he is cast in the play.

Sometimes, of course, the actor's rendering of a part seems incomplete to someone in the audience who has deeply considered the play, but who does not remember that there are literary and dramatic ways of interpreting a character, and that the second, though much more vivid, cannot, from its mere narrowing down, always be so interesting as the first. A class may argue for half an hour as to whether Lady Macbeth faints or not. On

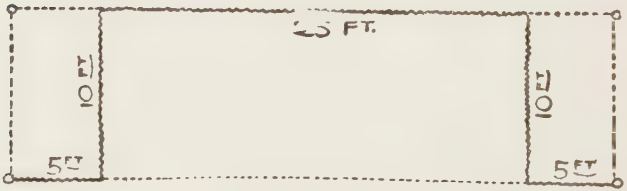
the stage she must faint. They may argue as to whether the ghost of Banquo "really" appears to Macbeth or not. On the stage he must appear. (It is true that some stage managers do not let him do so: but Shakespeare's directions are—"The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.") The Porter scene, when read, may seem far from "funny"; but on the stage the Porter is a fumbling, foolish, "humorous" old man. Things may be discussed at length and left unsettled in the classroom, but there is no "perhaps, perhaps not" on the stage. That is why it is so important to get a good clean-cut piece of acting, and to have a good sound reason, based on the play, for what you do.

The production of the play, though it may be very expensive, may be done simply and effectively. Soon every school that values acting as part of its social and intellectual life will have an "arras stage," or, failing this, dark curtains which make an effective background for the players. These curtains may be of black, deep blue, or dark purple, stencilled with a pattern in orange or gold. Lighting is of some importance in this play, where the shifting of lurid gleam and darkness is as significant as in the first book of *Paradise Lost*. One of the most interesting developments of modern theatre-craft is in methods of lighting, but a school company cannot afford expensive apparatus. However, it is generally possible to darken. The stage should be dim for the witch-scenes, with rumbling of thunder (various devices: trays are the commonest and cheapest) and flashing of lightning (a large electric torch, the bulb painted blue, flashed from high in the wings should give enough effect for the small school stage). The first witch-scene should pass very quickly. I once heard Professor Clark, of Chicago, speak finely of its lyric quality—the usual acting of it leaves one, as he said, merely wondering what type of vegetable one would best like to cast at the players.

Few antics are necessary. For a moment the weird sisters have drifted together in their course through storm and whirlwind; strange and dreadful, voice cries to voice through the "fog and filthy air" of evil—and in that crying is the fateful "There to meet with Macbeth."



ELEVATION



GROUND PLAN

PLAN OF STAGE

Let the scene sweep across the stage; have no "curtain" between Scenes i. and ii. Immediately should come the change from darkness to light, from the strange wailing cry of the witches to the practical talk of men. In Act II., torches are carried by Fleance, and by those who come to "wake" the king. Unfortunately the usual flaming type is dangerous. In his *Shakespeare for Community Players* (Dent & Sons), an invaluable book for the school

stage-manager, Mr. Roy Mitchell suggests—"a fourteen-inch lantern of pierced work, or a simple frame covered with tracing linen and decorated with coloured ink, carried on a pole, and lighted with a candle." The whole of this act should be done in dim light, which may be given by two or three lanterns in the courtyard. The furnishing of the "banquet scene" must be very simple: a trestle table, set up at the back of the stage, benches, flagons, platters, tankards, of the earliest type.

Twentieth century taste is much in favour of simple barbaric design, and many effective eleventh-century properties may be borrowed for the night from modern homes. Floor candlesticks may be used with excellent decorative effect. These, and various types of lantern and candelabra which may be made by the ingenious, are described and illustrated in Mr. Mitchell's book. A fire for the witch scene in Act IV. may be made with a framework of sticks and red transparent paper, lighted from below by an electric torch.

Dress is not difficult. The period is early. When I asked a Scottish authority on such matters what was the costume of thane and lady in the eleventh century, I got the answer, delivered with proper dourness, "In the eleventh century Scots wore what they could get." No better news for the robe-maker to a school company! On the modern stage Lady Macbeth generally wears a dress like that of Miss Ellen Terry in Sargent's famous portrait of her as she appeared in the part. It is a vivid bluish-green robe with a heavily-jewelled girdle round the hips, and loose flowing sleeves. Sometimes she wears red and gold, sometimes orange, always a splendid colour, vivid and glowing, a convention based on the force of the character, her fiery determination, and the strength with which she impresses her personality on the play. Dulac's poster for a recent *Macbeth* represents a good stage figure of the hero, in short tunic, belt with hunting-

knife, stockings like those worn with the modern kilt, rolled over below the knee. These are bound crosswise with braid passed under the foot and reaching to a few inches above the ankle. A plaid is thrown across his shoulder. (Reproductions of these pictures appear in *Shakespeare in Pictorial Art*, a book issued by the *Studio* in 1916, quite an interesting one to have, though some of the illustrations are so obviously of the period at which they were made that they are not very useful as models for the dressing of a Shakespeare play.) Lady Macduff's robe should be like Lady Macbeth's in design, but of a faint quiet colour. On the professional stage the hero and heroine wear distinctive robes as king and queen in Act III.; this is not necessary in the school theatre, where the fewer changes the better. The narrow circlets they wear as crowns will be sufficient indication of their royalty. The tunics of the thanes are short and coarse, and their breast-plates made of stiff dark stuff that will look like hide. For variety, some of them should have a simple cloak or a hide cast over one shoulder like a Highlander's plaid. Their helmets should be close-fitting, like steel caps. The round crown of an old straw hat, covered with silver tissue, makes one of these quite realistically. The shields or targes are round, and may be made of cardboard covered with dull silver paper, and a wide piece of strong elastic should be fixed over the inside so that the shield may be easily slipped on to the arm. In the banquet scene the thanes should discard their helmets, and wear bands of broad gold or silver or dull copper-coloured braid, sewn with a few flat bright clear beads to look like jewels. The knees should be bare; the stockings bound crosswise with dark braid. The shoes are flat. As the period is early, the whole effect of the dress must be simple and barbaric—use or suggest hides, roughly-woven fabrics, strongly and simply forged weapons, ornament only of a big splendid kind—a thick

chain, a perfectly plain armlet, jewels in girdle or on breast-plate. Some members of the company always have things to bring from home: especially in Scotland there will be plaids, cairngorms, skean-dhus and dirks which will be most effective, but the stage-manager should firmly refuse anything which is meant for "dressing-up," but which is too elaborate for the picture.

Shakespeare himself has described his witches, "so withered and so wild in their attire." They have bent figures, bare feet, wild dishevelled hair, and their garments are greenish-grey, patched and tattered. Study strange creeping or sudden motion, and wild gesture. Try to make this leering, mocking, supernatural evil, evil for evil's sake, "other-world," distinct from the tortured human wickedness of Macbeth, as distinct as the face of a gargoyle is from the face of a man in pain. One stage tradition makes one of the witches beautiful with the beauty of the nightmare Life-in-Death that Coleridge created.

> Her lips were red, her looks were free,
> Her locks were yellow as gold:
> Her skin was white as leprosy.

There is certainly no warrant for this in the text, though it gives an interesting enough picture.

The play is a short one—touring Shakespearean companies like to play it on Saturday nights—and there is no reason to abbreviate it if you are acting it in the hall on some special occasion. It is a play one is particularly reluctant to shorten: as in *Othello*, the action is extraordinarily swift, and the most famous single scenes cannot be detached from the rest. Cuts which may be made are the Hecate scenes (not by Shakespeare), the murder of Lady Macduff, the long conversation at the opening of Act IV. in which Malcolm tests the faith of Macduff, the talk about the king's powers, and episodes during the battle, such as the slaying of young Siward.

AN ACTING APPENDIX

In form-room work, there is special point in the acting of certain scenes by classes which interpret differently the chief characters and their influence upon and reaction to one another, and want to illustrate their theories. This is valuable work, and forms a good preparation for a later production of the play by a picked company from the whole school. No actor should take his part too easily, even if it seems a small one. A man may imagine himself familiar with a tragedy, but, returning to it after even a short space of time, he will find much that seems new, and wonder how this and that could have passed unnoticed. Your mind will never come in contact with an art fuller and greater than Shakespeare's, and to interpret finely on the stage what is the finest interpretation of life in the world is a task which deserves all the thought and power you can give to it.

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